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NOT

Thomas THE Lett.

WORKS

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.

A NEW EDITION,

IN FIFTEEN VOLUMES.

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

VOL. III.

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REPLY

TO A

PAPER IN THE GAZETTEER

OF

MAY 26, 1757 *.

IT is observed in the sage Gil Blas, that an exasperated author is not easily pacified. I have, therefore, very little hope of making my peace with the writer of the Eight Days Journey: indeed so little, that I have long deliberated whether I should not rather sit silently down under his displeasure, than aggravate my misfortune by a defence of which my heart forebodes the ill success. Deliberation is often useless. I am afraid that I have at last made the wrong choice; and that I might better have resigned my cause, without a struggle, to time and fortune, since I shall run the hazard of a new offence, by the necessity of asking him *why he is angry*.

Distress and terror often discover to us those faults with which we should never have reproached ourselves in a happy state. Yet, dejected as I am, when I review the transaction between me

* From the Literary Magazine, vol. II. page 253.

and this writer, I cannot find that I have been deficient in reverence. When his book was first printed, he hints that I procured a sight of it before it was published. How the sight of it was procured I do not now very exactly remember; but if my curiosity was greater than my prudence, if I laid rash hands on the fatal volume, I have surely suffered like him who burst the box from which evil rushed into the world.

I took it, however, and inspected it as the work of an author not higher than myself; and was confirmed in my opinion, when I found that these letters were *not written to be printed*. I concluded, however, that though not *written* to be *printed*, they were *printed* to be *read*, and inserted one of them in the collection of November last. Not many days after I received a note, informing me, that I ought to have waited for a more correct edition. This injunction was obeyed. The edition appeared, and I supposed myself at liberty to tell my thoughts upon it, as upon any other book, upon a royal manifesto, or an act of parliament. But see the fate of ignorant temerity! I now find, but find too late, that instead of a writer whose only power is in his pen, I have irritated an important member of an important corporation; a man who, as he tells us in his letters, puts horses to his chariot.

It was allowed to the disputant of old to yield up the controversy with little resistance to the master of forty legions. Those who know how weakly naked truth can defend her advocates, would forgive me if I should pay the same respect to a Governor of the Foundlings. Yet the con-

sciousness of my own rectitude of intention incites me to ask once again, how I have offended.

There are only three subjects upon which my unlucky pen has happened to venture. Tea; the author of the Journal; and the Foundling Hospital.

Of Tea what have I said? That I have drank it twenty years without hurt, and therefore believe it not to be poison: that if it dries the fibres, it cannot soften them; that if it constringes, it cannot relax. I have modestly doubted whether it has diminished the strength of our men, or the beauty of our women; and whether it much hinders the progress of our woollen or iron manufactures; but I allowed it to be a barren superfluity, neither medicinal nor nutricious, that neither supplied strength nor cheerfulness, neither relieved weariness, nor exhilerated sorrow: I inserted, without charge or suspicion of falsehood, the sums exported to purchase it; and proposed a law to prohibit it for ever.

Of the author I unfortunately said, that his injunction was somewhat too magisterial. This I said before, I knew that he was a Governor of the Foundlings; but he seems inclined to punish this failure of respect, as the czar of Muscovy made war upon Sweden, because he was not treated with sufficient honours when he passed through the country in disguise. Yet was not this irreverence without extenuation. Something was said of the merit of *meaning well*, and the Journalist was declared to be a man *whose failings might well be pardoned for his virtues*. This is the highest praise which human gratitude can confer upon

human merit; praise that would have more than satisfied Titus or Augustus, but which I must own to be inadequate and penurious, when offered to the member of an important corporation.

I am asked whether I meant to satirize the man or criticise the writer, when I say that *he believes, only perhaps because he has inclination to believe it, that the English and Dutch consume more Tea than the vast empire of China?* Between the writer and the man I did not at that time consider the distinction. The writer I found not of more than mortal might, and I did not immediately recollect that the man put horses to his chariot. But I did not write wholly without consideration. I knew but two causes of belief, evidence and inclination. What evidence the Journalist could have of the Chinese consumption of Tea, I was not able to discover. The officers of the East India Company are excluded, they best know why, from the towns and the country of China; they are treated as we treat gypsies and vagrants, and obliged to retire every night to their own hovel. What intelligence such travellers may bring is of no great importance. And though the missionaries boast of having once penetrated further, I think they have never calculated the Tea drank by the Chinese. There being thus no evidence for his opinion, to what could I ascribe it but to inclination?

I am yet charged more heavily for having said that *he has no intention to find any thing right home.* I believe every reader restrained this imputation to the subject which produced it, and supposed me to insinuate only that he meant to speak no part of the Tea-table, whether essence or e

cumstance. But this line he has selected as an instance of virulence and acrimony, and confutes it by a lofty and splendid panegyrick on himself. He asserts, that he finds many things right at home, and that he loves his country almost to enthusiasm.

I had not the least doubt that he found in his country many things to please him; nor did I suppose that he desired the same inversion of every part of life, as of the use of Tea. The proposal of drinking Tea sour shewed indeed such a disposition to practical paradoxes, that there was reason to fear lest some succeeding letter should recommend the dress of the Picts, or the cookery of the Eskimaux. However, I met with no other innovations, and therefore was willing to hope that he found something right at home.

But his love of his country seemed not to rise quite to enthusiasm, when, amidst his rage against Tea, he made a smooth apology for the East India Company, as men who might not think themselves obliged to be political arithmeticians. I hold, though no enthusiastick patriot, that every man who lives and trades under the protection of a community, is obliged to consider whether he hurts or benefits those who protect him; and that the most which can be indulged to private interest is a neutral traffick, if any such can be, by which our country is not injured, though it may not be benefited.

But he now renews his declamation against Tea, notwithstanding the greatness or power of those that have interest or inclination to support it. I know not of what power or greatness he may dream. The importers only have an interest in

defending it. I am sure they are not great, and I hope they are not powerful. Those whose inclination leads them to continue this practice, are too numerous, but I believe their power is such, as the Journalist may defy without enthusiasm. The love of our country, when it rises to enthusiasm, is an ambiguous and uncertain virtue: when a man is enthusiastick, he ceases to be reasonable, and when he once departs from reason, what will he do but drink sour Tea? As the Journalist, though enthusiastically zealous for his country, has, with regard to smaller things, the placid happiness of philosophical indifference, I can give him no disturbance by advising him to restrain even the love of his country within due limits, lest it should sometimes swell too high, fill the whole capacity of his soul, and leave less room for the love of truth.

Nothing now remains but that I review my positions concerning the Foundling Hospital. What I declared last month, I declare now once more, that I found none of the children that appeared to have heard of the catechism. It is inquired how I wandered, and how I examined? There is doubtless subtility in the question; I know not well how to answer it. Happily I did not wander alone; I attended some ladies with another gentleman, who all heard and assisted the inquiry with equal grief and indignation. I did not conceal my observations. Notice was given of this shameful defect soon after, at my request, to one of the highest names of the society. This I am now told is incredible; but since it is true, and the past is out of human power, the most important corporation cannot make it false. But why is it

incredible? Because in the rules of the hospital the children are ordered to learn the rudiments of religion. Orders are easily made, but they do not execute themselves. They say their catechism, at stated times, under an able master. But this able master was, I think, not elected before last February; and my visit happened, if I mistake not, in November. The children were shy when interrogated by a stranger. This may be true, but the same shyness I do not remember to have hindered them from answering other questions: and I wonder why children so much accustomed to new spectators should be eminently shy.

My opponent, in the first paragraph, calls the inference that I made from this negligence, a hasty conclusion: to the decency of this expression I had nothing to object: but as he grew hot in his career, his enthusiasm began to sparkle; and in the vehemence of his postscript, he charges my assertions, and my reasons for advancing them, with folly and malice. His argumentation being somewhat enthusiastical, I cannot fully comprehend, but it seems to stand thus: my insinuations are foolish or malicious, since I know not one of the Governors of the Hospital; for he that knows not the Governors of the Hospital, must be very foolish or malicious.

He has, however, so much kindness for me, that he advises me to consult my safety when I talk of corporations. I know not what the most important corporation can do, becoming manhood, by which my safety is endangered. My reputation is safe, for I can prove the fact; my quiet is safe,

for I meant well; and for any other safety, I am not used to be very solicitous.

I am always sorry when I see any being labouring in vain; and in return for the Journalist's attention to my safety, I will confess some compassion for his tumultuous resentment; since all his invectives fume into the air, with so little effect upon me, that I still esteem him as one that has the *merit of meaning well;* and still believe him to be *a man whose failings may be justly pardoned for his virtues.*

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

APPOINTED TO MANAGE THE

Contributions begun at London, Dec. 18, 1758, *for Clothing French Prisoners of War.*

THE Committee entrusted with the money contributed to the relief of the subjects of France, now prisoners in the British dominions, here lay before the publick an exact account of all the sums received and expended, that the donors may judge how properly their benefactions have been applied.

Charity would lose its name, were it influenced by so mean a motive as human praise: it is therefore not intended to celebrate by any particular memorial, the liberality of single persons, or distinct societies; it is sufficient that their works praise them.

Yet he who is far from seeking honour, may very justly obviate censure. If a good example has been set, it may lose its influence by misrepresentation; and to free charity from reproach, is itself a charitable action.

Against the relief of the French only one argument has been brought; but that one is so popular and specious, that if it were to remain unexamined, it would by many be thought irrefragable. It has been urged, that charity, like other virtues, may be improperly and unseasonably exerted; that while we are relieving Frenchmen, there remain many Englishmen unrelieved; that while we lavish pity on our enemies, we forget the misery of our friends.

Grant this argument all it can prove, and what is the conclusion?—That to relieve the French is a good action, but that a better may be conceived. This is all the result, and this all is very little. To do the best can seldom be the lot of man: it is sufficient if, when opportunities are presented, he is ready to do good. How little virtue could be practised, if beneficence were to wait always for the most proper objects, and the noblest occasions; occasions that may never happen, and objects that may never be found.

It is far from certain, that a single Englishman will suffer by the charity to the French. New scenes of misery make new impressions; and much of the charity which produced these donations, may be supposed to have been generated by a species of calamity never known among us before. Some imagine that the laws have provided all necessary relief in common cases, and remit the poor to the care of the publick; some have been deceived by fictitious misery, and are afraid of encouraging imposture; many have observed want to be the effect of vice, and consider casual almsgivers as patrons of idleness. But all these difficulties

vanish in the present case: we know that for the Prisoners of War there is no legal provision; we see their distress, and are certain of its cause; we know that they are poor and naked, and poor and naked without a crime.

But it is not necessary to make any concessions. The opponents of this charity must allow it to be good, and will not easily prove it not to be the best. That charity is best, of which the consequences are most extensive: the relief of enemies has a tendency to unite mankind in fraternal affection; to soften the acrimony of adverse nations, and dispose them to peace and amity: in the mean time, it alleviates captivity, and takes away something from the miseries of war. The rage of war, however mitigated, will always fill the world with calamity and horror: let it not then be unnecessarily extended; let animosity and hostility cease together; and no man be longer deemed an enemy, than while his sword is drawn against us.

The effects of these contributions may, perhaps, reach still further. Truth is best supported by virtue; we may hope from those who feel or who see our charity, that they shall no longer detest as heresy that religion, which makes its professors the followers of Him, who has commanded us to "do good to them that hate us."

ON THE

BRAVERY

OF THE

ENGLISH COMMON SOLDIERS.

BY those who have compared the military genius of the English with that of the French nation, it is remarked, that *the French officers will always lead, if the soldiers will follow;* and that *the English soldiers will always follow, if their officers will lead.*

In all pointed sentences, some degree of accuracy must be sacrificed to conciseness; and, in this comparison, our officers seem to lose what our soldiers gain. I know not any reason for supposing that the English officers are less willing than the French to lead; but it is, I think, universally allowed, that the English soldiers are more willing to follow. Our nation may boast, beyond any other people in the world, of a kind of epidemick bravery, diffused equally through all its ranks. We can shew a peasantry of heroes, and fill our armies with clowns, whose courage may vie with that of their general. There may be some pleasure in tracing the causes of this plebeian magnanimity. The qualities which commonly make an

army formidable, are long habits of regularity, great exactness of discipline, and great confidence in the commander. Regularity may, in time, produce a kind of mechanical obedience to signals and commands, like that which the perverse Cartesians impute to animals; discipline may impress such an awe upon the mind, that any danger shall be less dreaded than the danger of punishment; and confidence in the wisdom or fortune of the general, may induce the soldiers to follow him blindly to the most dangerous enterprize.

What may be done by discipline and regularity, may be seen in the troops of the Russian empress and Prussian monarch. We find that they may be broken without confusion, and repulsed without flight.

But the English troops have none of these requisites in any eminent degree. Regularity is by no means part of their character: they are rarely exercised, and therefore shew very little dexterity in their evolutions as bodies of men, or in the manual use of their weapons as individuals; they neither are thought by others, nor by themselves, more active or exact than their enemies, and therefore derive none of their courage from such imaginary superiority.

The manner in which they are dispersed in quarters over the country during times of peace, naturally produces laxity of discipline: they are very little in sight of their officers; and, when they are not engaged in the slight duty of the guard, are suffered to live every man his own way.

The equality of English privileges, the impartiality of our laws, the freedom of our tenures, and

the prosperity of our trade, dispose us very little to reverence of superiors. It is not to any great esteem of the officers that the English soldier is indebted for his spirit in the hour of battle; for perhaps it does not often happen that he thinks much better of his leader than of himself. The French Count, who has lately published the *Art of War*, remarks how much soldiers are animated, when they see all their dangers shared by those who were born to be their masters, and whom they consider as beings of a different rank. The Englishman despises such motives of courage: he was born without a master; and looks not on any man, however dignified by lace or titles, as deriving from nature any claims to his respect, or inheriting any qualities superior to his own.

There are some, perhaps, who would imagine that every Englishman fights better than the subjects of absolute governments, because he has more to defend. But what has the English more than the French soldier? Property they are both commonly without. Liberty is, to the lowest rank of every nation, little more than the choice of working or starving; and this choice is, I suppose, equally allowed in every country. The English soldier seldom has his head very full of the constitution; nor has there been, for more than a century, any war that put the property or liberty of a single Englishman in danger.

Whence then is the courage of the English vulgar? It proceeds, in my opinion, from that dissolution of dependance which obliges every man to regard his own character. While every man is fed by his own hands, he has no need of any servile

arts; he may always have wages for his labour; and is no less necessary to his employer, than his employer is to him. While he looks for no protection from others, he is naturally roused to be his own protector; and having nothing to abate his esteem of himself, he consequently aspires to the esteem of others. Thus every man that crowds our streets is a man of honour, disdainful of obligation, impatient of reproach, and desirous of extending his reputation among those of his own rank; and as courage is in most frequent use, the fame of courage is most eagerly pursued. From this neglect of subordination I do not deny that some inconveniencies may from time to time proceed: the power of the law does not always sufficiently supply the want of reverence, or maintain the proper distinction between different ranks: but good and evil will grow up in this world together; and they who complain, in peace, of the insolence of the populace, must remember, that their insolence in peace is bravery in war.

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

PLANS OFFERED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION

OF

BLACKFRIARS BRIDGE.

In THREE LETTERS, *to the* PRINTER *of the* GAZETTEER.

LETTER I.

SIR, *Dec.* 1. 1759.

THE plans which have been offered by different architects, of different reputation and abilities, for the Construction of the Bridge intended to be built at Blackfriars, are, by the rejection of the greater part, now reduced to a small number; in which small number three are supposed to be much superior to the rest; so that only three architects are now properly competitors for the honour of this great employment; *by two of whom are proposed semicircular*, and by the other *elliptical arches*.

The question is, therefore, whether an elliptical or semicircular arch is to be preferred?

The first excellence of a bridge built for commerce over a large river, is strength; for a bridge

which cannot stand, however beautiful, will boast its beauty but a little while; the stronger arch is therefore to be preferred, and much more to be preferred, if with greater strength it has greater beauty.

Those who are acquainted with the mathematical principles of architecture, are not many; and yet fewer are they who will, upon any single occasion, endure any laborious stretch of thought, or harass their minds with unaccustomed investigations. We shall therefore attempt to shew the *weakness of the elliptical arch*, by arguments which appeal simply to common reason, and which will yet stand the test of geometrical examination.

All arches have a certain degree of weakness. No hollow building can be equally strong with a solid mass, of which every upper part presses perpendicularly upon the lower. Any weight laid upon the top of an arch, has a tendency to force that top into the vacuity below; and the arch thus loaded on the top, stands only because the stones that form it, being wider in the upper than in the lower parts, that part that fills a wider space cannot fall through a space less wide; but the force which laid upon a flat would press directly downwards, is dispersed each way in a lateral direction, as the parts of a beam are pushed out to the right and left by a wedge driven between them. In proportion as the stones are wider at the top than at the bottom, they can less easily be forced downwards, and as their lateral surfaces tend more from the centre to each side, to so much more is the pressure directed laterally towards the piers, and so much less perpendicularly towards the vacuity.

Upon this plain principle the semicircular arch may be demonstrated to excel in strength the elliptical arch, which approaching nearer to a strait line, must be constructed with stones whose diminution downwards is very little, and of which the pressure is almost perpendicular.

It has yet been sometimes asserted by hardy ignorance, that the elliptical arch is stronger than the semicircular; or, in other terms, that any mass is more strongly supported the less it rests upon the supporters. If the elliptical arch be equally strong with the semicircular, that is, if an arch, by approaching to a strait line, loses none of its stability, it will follow, that all arcuation is useless, and that the bridge may at last, without any inconvenience, consist of stone laid in strait lines from pillar to pillar. But if a straight line will bear no weight, which is evident at the first view, it is plain likewise, that an ellipsis will bear very little; and that as the arch is more curved, its strength is increased.

Having thus evinced the superior strength of the semicircular arch, we have sufficiently proved, that it ought to be preferred; but to leave no objection unprevented, we think it proper likewise to observe, that the elliptical arch must always appear to want elevation and dignity; and that if beauty be to be determined by suffrages, the elliptical arch will have little to boast, since the only bridge of that kind has now stood *two hundred years without imitation.*

If in opposition to these arguments, and in defiance at once of right reason and general authority, the elliptical arch should at last be chosen, what

will the world believe, than that some other motive than reason influenced the determination? And some degree of partiality cannot but be suspected by him, who has been told that one of the judges appointed to decide this question, is Mr M—ll—r, who having, by ignorance or thoughtlessness, already preferred the elliptical arch, will probably think himself obliged to maintain his own judgment, though his opinion will avail but little with the publick, when it is known that Mr S—ps—n declares it to be false.

He that in the list of the committee chosen for the superintendency of the bridge, reads many of the most illustrious names of this great city, will hope that the greater number will have more reverence for the opinion of posterity, than to disgrace themselves, and the metropolis of the kingdom, in compliance with any man, who, instead of voting, aspires to dictate, perhaps without any claim to such superiority, either by greatness of birth, dignity of employment, extent of knowledge, or largeness of fortune.

LETTER II.

SIR, *Dec.* 8. 1759.

IN questions of general concern, there is no law of government, or rule of decency, that forbids open examination and publick discussion. I shall therefore not betray, by a mean apology, that right which no man has power, and, I suppose, no wise man has desire to refuse me, but shall con-

sider the letter published by you last Friday, in defence of Mr M——'s design for a new bridge.

Mr M—— proposes elliptical arches. It has been objected that elliptical arches are weak, and therefore improper for a bridge of commerce, in a country where greater weights are ordinarily carried by land than perhaps in any other part of the world. That there is an elliptical bridge at Florence is allowed, but the objectors maintain, that its stability is so much doubted, *that carts* are not permitted to pass over it.

To this no answer is made, but that it was built for coaches; and if it had been built for carts, it would have been made stronger: thus all the controvertists agree, that the bridge is too weak for carts; and it is of little importance, whether carts are prohibited because the bridge is weak, or whether the architect, knowing that carts were prohibited, voluntarily constructed a weak bridge. The instability of the elliptical arch has been sufficiently proved by argument, and *Ammanuti*'s attempt has proved it by example.

The iron rail, whether gilt or varnished, appears to me unworthy of debate. I suppose every judicious eye will discern it to be minute and trifling, equally unfit to make a part of a great design, whatever be its colour. I shall only observe how little the writer understands his own positions, when he recommends it to be cast in whole pieces from pier to pier. That iron forged is stronger than iron cast, every smith can inform him; and if it be cast in large pieces, the fracture of a single bar must be repaired by a new piece.

The abrupt rise, which is feared from firm circular arches, may be easily prevented, by a little

extension of the abutment at each end, which will take away the objection, and add almost nothing to the expence.

The whole of the argument in favour of Mr. M——, is only that there is an elliptical bridge at Florence, and an iron balustrade at Rome; the bridge is owned to be weak, and the iron balustrade we consider as mean; and are loth that our own country should unite two follies in a publick work.

The architrave of Perault, which has been pompously produced, bears nothing but its entablature, and is so far from owing its support to the artful section of the stone, that it is held together by cramps of iron; to which I am afraid Mr M—— must have recourse, if he persists in his ellipsis, or, to use the words of his vindicator, forms his arch of four segments of circles drawn from four different centres.

That Mr M—— obtained the prize of the architecture at Rome, a few month ago, is willingly confessed; nor do his opponents doubt that he obtained it by deserving it. May he continue to obtain whatever he deserves; but let it not be presumed that a prize granted at Rome, implies an irresistible degree of skill. The competition is only between boys, and the prize given to excite laudable industry, not to reward consummate excellence. Nor will the suffrage of the Romans much advance any name among those who know, what no man of science will deny, that architecture has for some time degenerated at Rome to the lowest state, and that the Pantheon is now deformed by petty decorations. I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER III.

SIR, *Dec.* 15. 1759.

IT is the common fate of erroneous positions, that they are betrayed by defence, and obscured by explanation; that their authors deviate from the main question into incidental disquisitions, and raise a mist where they should let in light.

Of all these concomitants of errors, the Letter of Dec. 10, in favour of elliptical arches, has afforded examples. A great part of it is spent upon digressions. The writer allows, that *the first excellence of a bridge is undoubtedly strength;* but this concession affords him an opportunity of telling us, that strength, or provision against decay, has its limits; and of mentioning the monument and cupola, without any advance towards evidence or argument.

The *first excellence of a bridge* is now allowed to be *strength;* and it has been asserted, that a semi-ellipsis has less strength than a semicircle. To this he first answers, that *granting* this position *for a moment*, the semi-ellipsis may yet have strength sufficient for the purposes of commerce. This grant, which was made but for a moment, needed not to have been made at all; for before he concludes his Letter, he undertakes to prove, that the *elliptical arch must in all respects be superior in strength to the semicircle.* For this daring assertion he made way by the intermediate paragraphs; in which he observes, that *the convexity of a semi-ellipsis may be increased at will to any degree that strength may require;* which is, that an ellipti-

cal arch may be made less elliptical, to be made less weak; or that an arch, which by its elliptical form is superior in strength to the semicircle, may become almost as strong as a semicircle, by being made almost semicircular.

That the longer diameter of an ellipsis may be shortened, till it shall differ little from a circle, is indisputably true; but why should the writer forget the semicircle differs as little from such an ellipsis? It seems that the difference, whether small or great, is to the advantage of the semicircle; for he does not promise that the elliptical arch, with all the convexity that his imagination can confer, will stand without *cramps of iron*, and *melted lead*, and *large stones*, and *a very thick arch;* assistances which the semicircle does not require, and which can be yet less required by a semi-ellipsis, which is *in all respects superior in strength.*

Of a man who loves opposition so well, as to be thus at variance with himself, little doubt can be made of his contrariety to others; nor do I think myself entitled to complain of disregard from one, with whom the performances of antiquity have so *little weight:* yet in defiance of all this contemptuous superiority, I must again venture to declare, that *a strait line will bear no weight;* being convinced, that not even the science of Vasari can make that form strong which the laws of nature have condemned to weakness. By the position, that *a strait line will bear nothing*, is meant, that *it receives no strength from straitness;* for that many bodies, laid in strait lines, will support weight by the cohesion of their parts, every one has found, who has seen dishes on a shelf or a thief upon the gallows. It

is not denied, that stones may be so crus
gether by enormous pressure on each side
heavy mass may safely be laid upon them;
strength must be derived merely from the
resistance; and the line so loaded will be its
of the load.

The semi-elliptical arch has one recom
tion yet unexamined; we are told that it is
of execution. Why difficulty should be
for its own sake, I am not able to discover
must not be forgotten, that as the conv
increased, the difficulty is lessened; and I k
well whether this writer, who appears equ
bitious of difficulty and studious of streng
wish to increase the convexity for the
strength, or to lessen it for the love of diffi

The friend of Mr M——, however he
mistaken in some of his opinions, does n
the appearance of reason, when he prefers
theories; and that I may not dismiss the c
without some appeal to facts, I will bor
example, suggested by a great artist, and
mended to those who may still doubt whic
two arches is the stronger, to press an egg
the ends, and then upon the sides.

I am, SIR,

Yours, &c.

SOME THOUGHTS

ON

AGRICULTURE,

BOTH ANCIENT AND MODERN:

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE HONOUR DUE TO AN ENGLISH FARMER *.

AGRICULTURE, in the primeval ages, was the common parent of traffick; for the opulence of mankind then consisted in cattle, and the product of tillage; which are now very essential for the promotion of trade in general, but more particularly so to such nations as are most abundant in cattle, corn, and fruits. The labour of the Farmer gives employment to the manufacturer, and yields a support for the other parts of a community: it is now the spring which sets the whole grand machine of commerce in motion; and the sail could not be spread without the assistance of the plough. But, though the Farmers are of such utility in a state, we find them in general too much disregarded among the politer kind of people in the present age; while we cannot help observing the honour that antiquity has always paid to the profession of the husbandman: which naturally leads us into some reflections upon that occasion.

* From the Visiter, for February 1756, p. 59.

Though mines of gold and silver should be exhausted, and the species made of them lost; though diamonds and pearls should remain concealed in the bowels of the earth, and the womb of the sea; though commerce with strangers be prohibited; though all arts which have no other object than splendour and embellishment, should be abolised; yet the fertility of the earth alone would afford an abundant supply for the occasions of an industrious people, by furnishing subsistence for them, and such armies as should be mustered in their defence. We, therefore, ought not to be surprized, that Agriculture was in so much honour among the ancients: for it ought rather to seem wonderful that it should ever cease to be so, and that the most necessary and most indispensable of all professions should have fallen into any contempt.

Agriculture was in no part of the world in higher consideration than Egypt, where it was the particular object of government and policy: nor was any country ever better peopled, richer, or more powerful. The Satrapæ, among the Assyrians and Persians, were rewarded, if the lands in their governments were well cultivated; but were punished, if that part of their duty was neglected. Africa abounded in corn; but the most famous countries were Thrace, Sardinia, and Sicily.

Cato, the censor, has justly called Sicily the magazine and nursing mother of the Roman people, who were supplied from thence with almost all their corn, both for the use of the city, and the subsistence of her armies: though we also find in Livy, that the Romans received no inconsiderable quantities of corn from Sardinia. But, when Rome

had made herself mistress of Carthage and Alexandria, Africa and Egypt became her store-houses: for those cities sent such numerous fleets every year, freighted with corn to Rome, that Alexandria alone annualy supplied twenty millions of bushels: and, when the harvest happened to fail in one of these provinces, the other came in to its aid, and supported the metropolis of the world; which, without this supply, would have been in danger of perishing by famine. Rome actually saw herself reduced to this condition under Augustus; for there remained only three days provision of corn in the city: and that prince was so full of tenderness for the people, that he had resolved to poison himself, if the expected fleets did not arrive before the expiration of that time; but they came; and the preservation of the Romans was attributed to the good fortune of their emperor: but wise precautions were taken to avoid the like danger for the future.

When the seat of empire was transplanted to Constantinople, that city was supplied in the same manner: and when the emperor Septimius Severus died, there was corn in the publick magazines for seven years, expending daily 75,000 bushels in bread, for 600,000 men.

The ancients were no less industrious in the cultivation of the vine than in that of corn, though they applied themselves to it later: for Noah planted it by order, and discovered the use that might be made of the fruit, by pressing out and preserving the juice. The vine was carried by the offspring of Noah into the several countries of the world: but Asia was the first to experience the

sweets of this gift; from whence it was imported to Europe and Africa, Greece and Italy, which were distinguished in so many other respects, were particularly so by the excellency of their wines. Greece was most celebrated for the wines of Cyprus, Lesbos, and Chio; the former of which is in great esteem at present: though the cultivation of the vine has been generally suppressed in the Turkish dominions. As the Romans were indebted to the Grecians for the arts and sciences, so were they likewise for the improvement of their wines; the best of which were produced in the country of Capua, and were called the *Massick*, *Calenian*, *Formian*, *Cæcuban*, and *Falernian*, so much celebrated by Horace. Domitian passed an edict for destroying all the vines, and that no more should be planted throughout the greatest part of the west; which continued almost two hundred years afterwards, when the emperor Probus employed his soldiers in planting vines in Europe, in the same manner as Hannibal had formerly employed his troops in planting olive-trees in Africa. Some of the ancients have endeavoured to prove, that the cultivation of vines is more beneficial than any other kind of husbandry: but, if this was thought so in the time of Columella, it is very different at present; nor were all the ancients of his opinion, for several gave the preference to pasture lands.

The breeding of cattle has always been considered as an important part of Agriculture. The riches of Abraham, Laban, and Job, consisted in their flocks and herds. We also find from Latinus in Virgil, and Ulysses in Homer, that the wealth of those princes consisted in cattle. It was like-

wise the same among the Romans, till the introduction of money; which put a value upon commodities, and established a new kind of barter. Varro has not disdained to give an extensive account of all the beasts that are of any use to the country, either for tillage, breed, carriage, or other conveniencies of man. And Cato, the censor, was of opinion, that the feeding of cattle was the most certain and speedy method of enriching a country.

Luxury, avarice, injustice, violence, and ambition, take up their ordinary residence in populous cities; while the hard laborious life of the husbandman will not admit of these vices. The honest Farmer lives in a wise and happy state, which inclines him to justice, temperance, sobriety, sincerity, and every virtue that can dignify human nature. This gave room for the poets to feign, that *Astræa*, the goddess of Justice, had her last residence among husbandmen, before she quitted the earth. Hesiod and Virgil have brought the assistance of the Muses in praise of Agriculture. Kings, generals, and philosophers, have not thought it unworthy their birth, rank, and genius, to leave precepts to posterity upon the utility of the husbandman's profession. Hiero, Attalus, and Archelaus, kings of Syracuse, Pergamus, and Cappadocia, have composed books for supporting and augmenting the fertility of their different countries. The Carthaginian general, Mago, wrote twenty-eight volumes upon this subject; and Cato, the censor, followed his example. Nor have Plato, Xenophon, and Aristotle, omitted this article, which makes an essential part of their politicks. And Cicero, speaking of the writings of Xenophon, says, "How fully and

" excellently does he, in that book called his *Oeco-*
" *nomicks* set out the advantages of husbandry,
" and a country life?"

When Britain was subject to the Romans, she annually supplied them with great quantities of corn; and the Isle of Anglesea was then looked upon as the granary for the western provinces: but the Britons, both under the Romans and Saxons, were employed like slaves at the plough. On the intermixture of the Danes and Normans, possessions were better regulated, and the state of vassalage gradually declined, till it was entirely wore off under the reigns of Henry VII. and Edward VI. for they hurt the old nobility by favouring the commons, who grew rich by trade, and purchased estates.

The wines of France, Portugal, and Spain, are now the best; while Italy can only boast of the wine made in Tuscany. The breeding of cattle is now chiefly confined to Denmark and Ireland. The corn of Sicily is still in great esteem, as well as what is produced in the northern countries: but England is the happiest spot in the universe for all the principal kinds of Agriculture, and especially its great produce of corn.

The improvement of our landed estates, is the enrichment of the kingdom: for, without this, how could we carry on our manufactures, or prosecute our commerce? We should look upon the English Farmer as the most useful member of society. His arable grounds not only supply his fellow-subjects with all kinds of the best grain, but his industry enables him to export great quantities to other kingdoms, which might otherwise starve;

particularly Spain and Portugal: for, in one year, there have been exported 51,520 quarters of barley, 219,781 of malt, 1,920 of oatmeal, 1,329 of rye, and 153,343 of wheat; the bounty on which amounted to 72,433 pounds. What a fund of treasure arises from his pasture lands, which breed such innumerable flocks of sheep, and afford such fine herds of cattle, to feed Britons, and clothe mankind! He rears flax and hemp for the making of linen; while his plantations of apples and hops supply him with generous kinds of liquors.

The land-tax, when at four shillings in the pound, produces 2,000,000 pounds a year. This arises from the labour of the husbandman: it is a great sum: but how greatly is it increased by the means it furnishes for trade? Without the industry of the Farmer, the manufacturer could have no goods to supply the merchant, nor the merchant find any employment for the mariners: trade would be stagnated; riches would be of no advantage to the great; and labour of no service to the poor.

The Romans, as historians all allow,
Sought, in extreme distress, the rural plough;
Io triumphe! for the village swain
Retir'd to be a nobleman * again.

* *Cincinnatus.*

FURTHER THOUGHTS

ON

AGRICULTURE*.

AT my last visit, I took the liberty of mentioning a subject, which, I think, is not considered with attention proportionate to its importance. Nothing can more fully prove the ingratitude of mankind, a crime often charged upon them, and often denied, than the little regard which the disposers of honorary rewards have paid to *Agriculture;* which is treated as a subject so remote from common life, by all those who do not immediately hold the plough, or give fodder to the ox, that I think there is room to question, whether a great part of mankind has yet been informed that life is sustained by the fruits of the earth. I was once indeed provoked to ask a lady of great eminence for genius, *Whether she knew of what bread is made?*

I have already observed, how differently Agriculture was considered by the heroes and wise men of the Roman commonwealth, and shall now only add, that even after the emperors had made great alteration in the system of life, and taught men to portion out their esteem to other qualities than use-

* From the Visiter, for March 1756, p. 111.

fulness, Agriculture still maintained its reputation, and was taught by the polite and elegant Celsus among the other arts.

The usefulness of Agriculture I have already shewn; I shall now, therefore, prove its necessity: and having before declared, that it produces the chief riches of a nation, I shall proceed to shew, that it gives its only riches, the only riches which we can call our own, and of which we need not fear either deprivation or diminution.

Of nations, as of individuals, the first blessing is independence. Neither the man nor the people can be happy to whom any human power can deny the necessaries or conveniencies of life. There is no way of living without the need of foreign assistance, but by the product of our own land, improved by our own labour. Every other source of plenty is perishable or casual.

Trade and manufactures must be confessed often to enrich countries; and we ourselves are indebted to them for those ships by which we now command the sea, from the equator to the poles, and for those sums with which we have shewn ourselves able to arm the nations of the north in defence of regions in the western hemisphere. But trade and manufactures, however profitable, must yield to the cultivation of lands in usefulness and dignity.

Commerce, however we may please ourselves with the contrary opinion, is one of the daughters of fortune, inconstant and deceitful as her mother; she chuses her residence where she is least expected, and shifts her abode, when her continuance is in appearance most firmly settled. Who can read

of the present distresses of the Genoese, whose only choice now remaining is, from what monarch they shall solicit protection? Who can see the Hanseatick towns in ruins, where perhaps the inhabitants do not always equal the number of the houses; but he will say to himself, These are the cities, whose trade enabled them once to give laws to the world, to whose merchants princes sent their jewels in pawn, from whose treasures armies were paid, and navies supplied! And who can then forbear to consider trade as a weak and uncertain basis of power, and wish to his own country greatness more solid, and felicity more durable?

It is apparent, that every trading nation flourishes, while it can be said to flourish, by the courtesy of others. We cannot compel any people to buy from us, or to sell to us. A thousand accidents may prejudice them in favour of our rivals; the workmen of another nation may labour for less price, or some accidental improvement, or natural advantage, may procure a just preference to their commodities; as experience has shewn, that there is no work of the hands, which, at different times, is not best performed in different places.

Traffick, even while it continues in its state of prosperity, must owe its success to Agriculture; the materials of manufacture are the produce of the earth. The wool which we weave into cloth, the wood which is formed into cabinets, the metals which are forged into weapons, are supplied by nature with the help of art. Manufactures, indeed, and profitable manufactures, are sometimes raised from imported materials, but then we are subjected a second time to the caprice of our

neighbours. The natives of Lombardy might easily resolve to retain their silk at home, and employ workmen of their own to weave it. And this will certainly be done when they grow wise and industrious, when they have sagacity to discern their true interest, and vigour to pursue it.

Mines are generally considered as the great sources of wealth, and superficial observers have thought the possession of great quantities of precious metals the first national happiness. But Europe has long seen, with wonder and contempt, the poverty of Spain, who thought himself exempted from the labour of tilling the ground, by the conquest of Peru, with its veins of silver. Time, however, has taught even this obstinate and haughty nation, that without Agriculture they may indeed be the transmitters of money, but can never be the possessors. They may dig it out of the earth, but must immediately send it away to purchase cloth or bread, and it must at last remain with some people wise enough to sell much, and to buy little; to live upon their own lands, without a wish for those things which nature has denied them.

Mines are themselves of no use, without some kind of Agriculture. We have, in our own country, inexhaustible stores of iron, which lie useless in the ore for want of wood. It was never the design of Providence to feed man without his own concurrence: we have from nature only what we cannot provide for ourselves; she gives us wild fruits which art must meliorate, and drossy metals, which labour must refine.

Particular metals are valuable, because they are scarce; and they are scarce, because the mines that

yield them are emptied in time. But the surface of the earth is more liberal than its caverns. The field, which is this autumn laid naked by the sickle, will be covered, in the succeeding summer, by a new harvest; the grass, which the cattle are devouring, shoots up again when they have passed over it.

Agriculture, therefore, and Agriculture alone, can support us without the help of others, in certain plenty and genuine dignity. Whatever we buy from without, the sellers may refuse; whatever we sell, manufactured by art, the purchasers may reject; but, while our ground is covered with corn and cattle, we can want nothing; and if imagination should grow sick of native plenty, and call for delicacies or embellishments from other countries, there is nothing which corn and cattle will not purchase.

Our country is, perhaps, beyond all others, productive of things necessary to life. The pine-apple thrives better between the tropicks, and better furs are found in the northern regions. But let us not envy these unnecessary privileges. Mankind cannot subsist upon the indulgencies of nature, but must be supported by her more common gifts. They must feed upon bread, and be clothed with wool; and the nation that can furnish these universal commodities, may have her ships welcomed at a thousand ports, or sit at home and receive the tribute of foreign countries, enjoy their arts, or treasure up their gold.

It is well known to those who have examined the state of other countries, that the vineyards of France are more than equivalent to the mines of

America; and that one great use of Indian gold, and Peruvian silver, is to procure the wines of Champaigne and Burgundy. The advantage is indeed always rising on the side of France, who will certainly have wines, when Spain, by a thousand natural or accidental causes, may want silver. But surely the vallies of England have more certain stores of wealth. Wines are chosen by caprice; the products of France have not always been equally esteemed; but there never was any age, or people, that reckoned bread among superfluities, when once it was known. The price of wheat and barley suffers not any variation, but what is caused by the uncertainty of seasons.

I am far from intending to persuade my countrymen to quit all other employments for that of manuring the ground. I mean only to prove, that we have, at home, all that we can want, and that therefore we need feel no great anxiety about the schemes of other nations for improving their arts, or extending their traffick. But there is no necessity to infer, that we should cease from commerce, before the revolution of things shall transfer it to some other regions! Such vicissitudes the world has often seen; and therefore such we have reason to expect. We hear many clamours of declining trade, which are not, in my opinion, always true; and many imputations of that decline to governors and ministers, which may be sometimes just, and sometimes calumnious. But it is foolish to imagine, that any care or policy can keep commerce at a stand, which almost every nation has enjoyed and lost, and which we must expect to lose as we have long enjoyed it.

There are some danger, lest our neglect of Agriculture should hasten its departure. Our industry has for many ages been employed in destroying the woods which our ancestors have planted. It is well known that commerce is carried on by ships, and that ships are built out of trees; and therefore, when I travel over naked plains, to which tradition has preserved the name of forests, or see hills arising on either hand, barren and useless, I cannot forbear to wonder, how that commerce, of which we promise ourselves the perpetuity, shall be continued by our descendants; nor can restrain a sigh, when I think on the time, a time at no great distance, when our neighbours may deprive us of our naval influence, by refusing us their timber.

By *Agriculture* only can commerce be perpetuated; and by *Agriculture* alone can we live in plenty without intercourse with other nations. This, therefore, is the great art, which every government ought to protect, every proprietor of lands to practise, and every inquirer into nature to improve.

THE

VISION OF THEODORE,

THE HERMIT OF TENERIFFE,

FOUND IN HIS CELL.

SON of Perseverance, whoever thou art, whose curiosity has led thee hither, read and be wise. He that now calls upon thee is Theodore, the Hermit of Teneriffe, who in the fifty-seventh year of his retreat left this instruction to mankind, lest his solitary hours should be spent in vain.

I was once what thou art now, a groveller on the earth, and a gazer at the sky; I trafficked and heaped wealth together; I loved and was favoured; I wore the robe of honour, and heard the musick of adulation; I was ambitious, and rose to greatness; I was unhappy, and retired. I sought for some time what I at length found here, a place where all real wants might be easily supplied, and where I might not be under the necessity of purchasing the assistance of men by the toleration of their follies. Here I saw fruits, and herbs, and water, and here determined to wait the hand of death, which I hope, when at last it comes, will fall lightly upon me.

Forty-eight years had I now passed in forgetfulness of all mortal cares, and without any in-

clination to wander farther than the necessity of procuring sustenance required; but as I stood one day beholding the rock that overhangs my cell, I found in myself a desire to climb it; and when I was on its top, was in the same manner determined to scale the next, till by degrees I conceived a wish to view the summit of the mountain, at the foot of which I had so long resided. This motion of my thoughts I endeavoured to suppress, not because it appeared criminal, but because it was new; and all change, not evidently for the better, alarms a mind taught by experience to distrust itself. I was often afraid that my heart was deceiving me, that my impatience of confinement arose from some earthly passion, and that my ardour to survey the works of nature was only a hidden longing to mingle once again in the scenes of life. I therefore endeavoured to settle my thoughts into their former state, but found their distraction every day greater. I was always reproaching myself with the want of happiness within my reach, and at last began to question whether it was not laziness rather than caution that restrained me from climbing to the summit of Teneriffe.

I rose therefore before the day, and began my journey up the steep of the mountain; but I had not advanced far, old as I was, and burthened with provisions, when the day began to shine upon me; the declivities grew more precipitous, and the sand slided from beneath my feet; at last, fainting with labour, I arrived at a small plain almost inclosed by rocks, and open only to the east. I sat down to rest a while, in full persuasion, that when I had recovered my strength I should proceed on my

design; but when once I had tasted ease, I found many reasons against disturbing it. The branches spread a shade over my head, and the gales of spring wafted odours to my bosom.

As I sat thus, forming alternately excuses for delay, and resolutions to go forward, an irresistible heaviness suddenly surprised me; I laid my head upon the bank, and resigned myself to sleep: when methought I heard the sound as of the flight of eagles, and a being of more than human dignity stood before me. While I was deliberating how to address him, he took me by the hand with an air of kindness, and asked me solemnly, but without severity, "Theodore, whither art thou going?" "I am climbing," answered I, "to the top "of the mountain, to enjoy a more extensive prospect of the works of nature." "Attend first," said he, "to the prospect which this place affords, "and what thou dost not understand I will explain. I am one of the benevolent beings who "watch over the children of the dust, to preserve "them from those evils which will not ultimately "terminate in good, and which they do not, by "their own faults, bring upon themselves. Look "round therefore without fear: observe, contemplate, and be instructed."

Encouraged by this assurance, I looked and beheld a mountain higher than Teneriffe, to the summit of which the human eye could never reach; when I had tired myself with gazing upon its height, I turned my eyes towards its foot, which I could easily discover, but was amazed to find it without foundation, and placed inconceivably in emptiness and darkness. Thus I stood terrified

and confused; above were tracts inscrutable, and below was total vacuity. But my protector, with a voice of admonition, cried out, Theodore, be not affrighted, but raise thy eyes again; the Mountain of Existence is before thee, survey it and be wise.

I then looked with more deliberate attention, and observed the bottom of the mountain to be a a gentle rise, and overspread with flowers; the middle to be more steep, embarrassed with crags. and interrupted by precipices, over which hung branches loaded with fruits, and among which were scattered palaces and bowers. The tracts which my eye could reach nearest the top were generally barren; but there were among the clefts of the rocks a few hardy ever-greens, which though they did not give much pleasure to the sight or smell, yet seemed to cheer the labour and facilitate the steps of those who were clambering among them.

Then, beginning to examine more minutely the different parts, I observed at a great distance a multitude of both sexes issuing into view from the bottom of the mountain. Their first actions I could not accurately discern; but, as they every moment approached nearer, I found that they amused themselves with gathering flowers under the superintendence of a modest virgin in a white robe, who seemed not over solicitous to confine them to any settled pace or certain track; for she knew that the whole ground was smooth and solid, and that they could not easily be hurt or bewildered. When, as it often happened, they plucked a thistle for a flower, Innocence, so was she called, would smile at the mistake. Happy, said I, are they who are under so gentle a government, and

yet are safe. But I had no opportunity to dwell long on the consideration of their felicity; for I found that Innocence continued her attendance but a little way, and seemed to consider only the flowery bottom of the mountain as her proper province. Those whom she abandoned scarcely knew that they were left, before they perceived themselves in the hands of Education, a nymph more severe in her aspect and imperious in her commands, who confined them to certain paths, in their opinion too narrow and too rough. These they were continually solicited to leave, by Appetite, whom Education could never fright away, though she sometimes awed her to such timidity, that the effects of her presence were scarcely perceptible. Some went back to the first part of the mountain, and seemed desirous of continuing busied in plucking flowers, but were no longer guarded by Innocence; and such as Education could not force back, proceeded up the mountain by some miry road, in which they were seldom seen, and scarcely ever regarded.

As Education led her troop up the mountain, nothing was more observable than that she was frequently giving them cautions to beware of Habits; and was calling out to one or another at every step, that a Habit was ensnaring them; that they would be under the dominion of Habit before they perceived their danger: and that those whom Habit should once subdue, had little hope of regaining their liberty.

Of this caution, so frequently repeated, I was very solicitous to know the reason, when my protector directed my regard to a troop of pygmies,

which appeared to walk silently before those that were climbing the mountain, and each to smooth the way before her follower. I found that I had missed the notice of them before, both because they were so minute as not easily to be discerned, and because they grew every moment nearer in their colour to the objects with which they were surrounded. As the followers of Education did not appear to be sensible of the presence of these dangerous associates, or, ridiculing their diminutive size, did not think it possible that human beings should ever be brought into subjection by such feeble enemies, they generally heard her precepts of vigilance with wonder: and, when they thought her eye withdrawn, treated them with contempt. Nor could I myself think her cautions so necessary as her frequent inculcations seemed to suppose, till I observed that each of these petty beings held secretly a chain in her hand, with which she prepared to bind those whom she found within her power. Yet these Habits under the eye of Education went quietly forward, and seemed very little to increase in bulk or strength; for though they were always willing to join with Appetite, yet when Education kept them apart from her, they would very punctually obey command, and make the narrow roads in which they were confined easier and smoother.

It was observable, that their stature was never at a stand, but continually growing or decreasing, yet not always in the same proportions: nor could I forbear to express my admiration, when I saw in how much less time they generally gained than lost bulk. Though they grew slowly in the road

of Education, it might however be perceived that they grew; but if they once deviated at the call of Appetite, their stature soon became gigantick; and their strength was such, that Education pointed out to her tribe many that were led in chains by them, whom she could never more rescue from their slavery. She pointed them out, but with little effect; for all her pupils appeared confident of their own superiority to the strongest Habit, and some seemed in secret to regret that they were hindered from following the triumph of Appetite.

It was the peculiar artifice of Habit not to suffer her power to be felt at first. Those whom she led, she had the address of appearing only to attend, but was continually doubling her chains upon her companions; which were so slender in themselves, and so silently fastened, that while the attention was engaged by other objects, they were not easily perceived. Each link grew tighter as it had been longer worn; and when by continual additions they became so heavy as to be felt, they were very frequently too strong to be broken.

When Education had proceeded in this manner to the part of the mountain where the declivity began to grow craggy, she resigned her charge to two powers of superior aspect. The meaner of them appeared capable of presiding in senates, or governing nations, and yet watched the steps of the other with the most anxious attention, and was visibly confounded and perplexed if ever she suffered her regard to be drawn away. The other seemed to approve her submission as pleasing, but with such a condescension as plainly shewed that

she claimed it as due; and indeed so great was her dignity and sweetness, that he who would not reverence, must not behold her.

"Theodore," said my protector, "be fearless, "and be wise; approach these powers, whose do- "minion extends to all the remaining part of the "Mountain of Existence." I trembled, and ventured to address the inferior nymph, whose eyes, though piercing and awful, I was not able to sustain. "Bright Power," said I, "by whatever "name it is lawful to address thee, tell me, thou "who presidest here, on what condition thy pro- "tection will be granted?" "It will be granted," said she, "only to obedience. I am Reason, of "all subordinate beings the noblest and the great- "est; who, if thou wilt receive my laws, will "reward thee like the rest of my votaries, by con- "ducting thee to Religion." Charmed by her voice and aspect, I professed my readiness to follow her. She then presented me to her mistress, who looked upon me with tenderness. I bowed before her, and she smiled.

When Education delivered up those for whose happiness she had been so long solicitous, she seemed to expect that they should express some gratitude for her care, or some regret at the loss of that protection which she had hitherto afforded them. But it was easy to discover, by the alacrity which broke out at her departure, that her presence had been long displeasing, and that she had been teaching those who felt in themselves no want of instruction. They all agreed in rejoicing that they should no longer be subject to her caprices, or disturbed by her documents, but

should be now under the direction only of Reason, to whom they made no doubt of being able to recommend themselves by a steady adherence to all her precepts. Reason counselled them, at their first entrance upon her province, to inlist themselves among the votaries of Religion; and informed them, that if they trusted to her alone, they would find the same fate with her other admirers, whom she had not been able to secure against Appetites and Passions, and who, having been seized by Habits in the regions of Desire, had been dragged away to the caverns of Despair. Her admonition was vain, the greater number declared against any other direction, and doubted not but by her superintendency they should climb with safety up the Mountain of Existence. "My "power," said Reason, "is to advise, not to com- "pel; I have already told you the danger of your "choice. The path seems now plain and even, "but there are asperities and pitfalls, over which "Religion only can conduct you. Look upwards, "and you perceive a mist before you settled upon "the highest visible part of the mountain; a mist "by which my prospect is terminated, and which "is pierced only by the eyes of Religion. Beyond "it are the temples of Happiness, in which those "who climb the precipice by her direction, after "the toil of their pilgrimage, repose for ever. I "know not the way, and therefore can only con- "duct you to a better guide. Pride has some- "times reproached me with the narrowness of my "view, but, when she endeavoured to extend it, "could only shew me, below the mist, the bowers "of Content; even they vanished as I fixed my

" eyes upon them; and those whom she persuaded " to travel towards them were enchained by Habits, " and ingulfed by Despair, a cruel tyrant, whose " caverns are beyond the darkness on the right " side and on the left, from whose prisons none " can escape, and whom I cannot teach you to " avoid."

Such was the declaration of Reason to those who demanded her protection. Some that recollected the dictates of Education, finding them now seconded by another authority, submitted with reluctance to the strict decree, and engaged themselves among the followers of Religion, who were distinguished by the uniformity of their march, though many of them were women, and by their continual endeavours to move upwards without appearing to regard the prospects which at every step courted their attention.

All those who determined to follow either Reason or Religion, were continually importuned to forsake the road, sometimes by Passions, and sometimes by Appetites, of whom both had reason to boast the success of their artifices; for so many were drawn into by-paths, that any way was more populous than the right. The attacks of the Appetites were more impetuous, those of the Passions longer continued. The Appetites turned their followers directly from the true way, but the Passions marched at first in a path nearly in the same direction with that of Reason and Religion; but deviated by slow degrees, till at last they entirely changed their course. Appetite drew aside the dull, and Passion the sprightly. Of the Appetites, Lust was the strongest; and of the Pas-

sions, Vanity. The most powerful assault was to be feared, when a passion and an Appetite joined their enticements; and the path of Reason was best followed, when a Passion called to one side, and an Appetite to the other.

These seducers had the greatest success upon the followers of Reason, over whom they scarcely ever failed to prevail, except when they counteracted one another. They had not the same triumphs over the votaries of Religion; for though they were often led aside for a time, Religion commonly recalled them by her emissary Conscience, before habit had time to enchain them. But they that professed to obey Reason, if once they forsook her, seldom returned; for she had no messenger to summon them but Pride, who generaly betrayed her, confidence, and employed all her skill to support Passion; and if ever she did her duty, was found unable to prevail, if Habit had interposed.

I soon found that the great danger to the followers of Religion was only from Habit; every other power was easily resisted, nor did they find any difficulty when they inadvertently quitted her, to find her again by the direction of Conscience: unless they had given time to Habit to draw her chain behind them, and bar up the way by which they had wandered. Of some of those, the condition was justly to be pitied, who turned at every call of Conscience, and tried, but without effect, to burst the chains of Habit: saw Religion walking forward at a distance, saw her with reverence, and longed to join her; but were, whenever they approached her, withheld by Habit, and lan-

guished in sordid bondage, which they could not escape, though they scorned and hated it.

It was evident that the Habits were so far from growing weaker by these repeated contests, that if they were not totally overcome, every struggle enlarged their bulk and increased their strength; and a Habit opposed and victorious was more than twice as strong as before the contest. The manner in which those who were weary of their tyranny endeavoured to escape from them, appeared by the event to be generally wrong; they tried to loose their chains one by one, and to retreat by the same degrees as they advanced; but before the deliverance was completed, Habit always threw new chains upon her fugitive; nor did any escape her but those who, by an effort sudden and violent, burst their shackles at once, and left her at a distance; and even of these, many, rushing too precipitately forward, and hindered by their terrors from stopping where they were safe, were fatigued with their own vehemence, and resigned themselves again to that power from whom an escape must be so dearly bought, and whose tyranny was little felt, except when it was resisted.

Some however there always were, who when they found Habit prevailing over them, called upon Reason or Religion for assistance; each of them willingly came to the succour of her suppliant, but neither with the same strength, nor the same success. Habit, insolent with her power, would often presume to parley with Reason, and offer to loose some of her chains if the rest might remain. To this Reason, who was never certain of victory, frequently consented, but always found her concession

destructive, and saw the captive led away by Habit to his former slavery. Religion never submitted to treaty, but held out her hand with certainty of conquest; and if the captive to whom she gave it did not quit his hold, always led him away in triumph, and placed him in the direct path to the temple of Happiness, where Reason never failed to congratulate his deliverance, and encourage his adherence to that power to whose timely succour he was indebted for it.

When the traveller was again placed in the road of Happiness, I saw Habit again gliding before him, but reduced to the stature of a dwarf, without strength and without activity; but when the Passions or Appetites, which had before seduced him, made their approach, Habit would on a sudden start into size, and with unexpected violence push him towards them. The wretch, thus impelled on one side, and allured on the other, too frequently quitted the road of Happiness, to which, after his second deviation from it, he rarely returned; but, by a timely call upon Religion, the force of Habit was eluded, her attacks grew fainter, and at last her correspondence with the enemy was entirely destroyed. She then began to employ those restless faculties in compliance with the power which she could not overcome; and as she grew again in stature and in strength, cleared away the asperities of the road to Happiness.

From this road I could not easily withdraw my attention, because all who travelled it appeared cheerful and satisfied; and the farther they proceeded, the greater appeared their alacrity, and the stronger their conviction of the wisdom of their

guide. Some, who had never deviated but by short excursions, had Habit in the middle of their passage vigorously supporting them, and driving off their Appetites and Passions which attempted to interrupt their progress. Others, who had entered this road late, or had long forsaken it, were toiling on without her help at least, and commonly against her endeavours. But I observed, when they approached to the barren top, that few were able to proceed without some support from Habit: and that they, whose Habits were strong, advanced towards the mists with little emotion, and entered them at last with calmness and confidence; after which, they were seen only by the eye of Religion; and though Reason looked after them with the most earnest curiosity, she could only obtain a faint glimpse, when her mistress, to enlarge her prospect, raised her from the ground. Reason, however, discerned that they were safe, but Religion saw that they were happy.

"Now, Theodore," said my protector, "withdraw thy view from the regions of obscurity, and "see the fate of those who, when they were dismissed by Education, would admit no direction "but that of Reason. Survey their wanderings, "and be wise."

I looked then upon the Road of Reason, which was indeed, so far as it reached, the same with that of Religion, nor had Reason discovered it but by her instruction. Yet when she had once been taught it she clearly saw that it was right; and Pride had sometimes incited her to declare that she discovered it herself, and persuaded her to offer herself as a guide to Religion: whom after many vain

experiments she found it her highest privelege to follow. Reason was however at last well instructed in part of the way, and appeared to teach it with some success, when her precepts were not misrepresented by Passion, or her influence everborne by Appetite. But neither of these enemies was she able to resist. When Passion seized upon her votaries, she seldom attempted opposition: she seemed indeed to contend with more vigour against Appetite, but was generally overwearied in the contest; and if either of her opponents had confederated with Habit, her authority was wholly at an end. When Habit endeavoured to captivate the votaries of Religion, she grew by slow degrees, and gave time to escape; but in seizing the unhappy followers of Reason, she proceeded as one that had nothing to fear, and enlarged her size, and doubled her chains without intermission, and without reserve.

Of those who forsook the directions of Reason, some were led aside by the Whispers of Ambition, who was perpetually pointing to stately palaces, situated on eminences on either side, recounting the delights of affluence; and boasting the security of power. They were easily persuaded to follow her, and Habit quickly threw her chains upon them; they were soon convinced of the folly of their choice, but few of them attempted to return. Ambition led them forward from precipice to precipice, where many fell and were seen no more. Those that escaped were, after a long series of hazards, generally delivered over to Avarice, and enlisted by her in the service of Tyranny, where they continued to heap up gold till their patrons or their

heirs pushed them headlong at last into the caverns of Despair.

Others were enticed by Intemperance to ramble in search of those fruits that hung over the rocks, and filled the air with their fragrance. I observed, that the Habits which hovered about these soon grew to an enormous size, nor were there any who less attempted to return to Reason, or sooner sunk into the gulfs that lay before them. When these first quitted the road, Reason looked after them with a frown of contempt, but had little expectations of being able to reclaim them; for the bowl of intoxication was of such qualities as to make them lose all regard but for the present moment; neither Hope nor Fear could enter their retreats; and Habit had so absolute a power, that even Conscience, if Religion had employed her in their favour, would not have been able to force an entrance.

There were others whose crime it was rather to neglect Reason than to disobey her; and who retreated from the heat and tumult of the way, not to the bowers of Intemperance, but to the maze of Indolence. They had this peculiarity in their condition, that they were always in sight of the road of Reason, always wishing for her presence, and always resolving to return to-morrow. In these was most eminently conspicuous the subtlety of Habit, who hung imperceptible shackles upon them, and was every moment leading them farther from the road which they always imagined that they had the power of reaching. They wandered on from one double of the labyrinth to another, with the chains of Habit hanging secretly upon them, till, as they advanced, the flowers grew paler, and

the scents fainter; they proceeded in their dreary march without pleasure in their progress, yet without power to return; and had this aggravation above all others, that they were criminal but not delighted. The drunkard for a time laughed over his wine; the ambitious man triumphed in the miscarriage of his rival; but the captives of Indolence had neither superiority nor merriment. Discontent lowered in their looks, and Sadness hovered round their shades; yet they crawled on, reluctant and gloomy, till they arrived at the depth of the recess, varied only with poppies and nightshade, where the dominion of Indolence terminates, and the hopeless wanderer is delivered up to Melancholy: the chains of Habit are rivetted for ever; and Melancholy, having tortured her prisoner for a time, consigns him at last to the cruelty of Despair.

While I was musing on this miserable scene, my protector called out to me, "Remember, Theodore, and be wise, and let not Habit prevail against thee." I started, and beheld myself surrounded by the rocks of Teneriffe; the birds of light were singing in the trees, and the glances of the morning darted upon me.

THE

PICTURE

OF

HUMAN LIFE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF CEBES, A DISCIPLE OF SOCRATES.

AS we were walking in the temple of Saturn, and observing several of the presents dedicated to that god, we were particularly struck with a picture hung up before one of the chapels. Both the manner and the subject of it seemed to be foreign; so that we were at a loss to know either whence, or what it was. What it represented was neither a city nor a camp; but an inclosure, containing two other inclosures, the one larger, and the other less. To the outer inclosure there was a portal, with a great number of persons standing before it, and several females within; and an aged man standing by the portal, in the attitude of giving directions to those who were going in.

After we had been debating among ourselves for some time, what all these things should mean, an elderly person, who happened to be by, addressed himself to us in the following manner:

Old Citizen. As you are strangers, 'tis no wonder that you should be at a loss to find out the meaning of this picture; since several of the natives of this city themselves know not the true intent of it: and indeed it was not placed here by any of our citizens, but by a stranger who visited these parts several years ago. He was a very sensible man, and a great philosopher; and, both in his conversation and practice, seemed to approach nearer to the doctrines of Pythagoras and Parmenides, than to any other of our sects. It was he who built this temple, and dedicated this picture in it to Saturn.

Stranger. Have you then seen the very person who gave it? and was you acquainted with him?

O. C. Yes, I was both well acquainted with him, and admired him very much; for though he was rather young, his conversation was full of wisdom; and, among other things, I have often heard him explaining the subject of the picture before us.

S. I entreat you, if it will not be too troublesome, to acquaint us with his explanation of it, for it is what we were all longing to know.

O. C. That will be rather a pleasure than any trouble to me; but I ought to forewarn you of one thing before I begin, which is this, that the hearing it is attended with some danger.

S. What danger can there be in that?

O. C. It is no less than this, that if you observe and follow the lesson that it gives you, it will make you wise and happy; but if you neglect it, you will be most miserable and wretched all your days. So that the explaining of this, is not unlike the riddle said to have been proposed to people by

the sphynx, which if the hearer understood, he was saved; but if not, he was to be destroyed. It is much the same in the present case; for ignorance is full as dangerous in life, as the sphynx was supposed to be in the fable. Now the picture before us includes all the doctrine of what is good in life, what is bad, and what indifferent; so that if you should take it wrong, you will be destroyed by it; not indeed all at once, as the people were by that monster; but by little and little, through all the residue of your life, as those are who are given up to be put to death by slow tortures. On the contrary, if you understand it aright, then will your ignorance be destroyed, and you will be saved, and become happy and blest for all the rest of your days. Do you, therefore, attend carefully to what I shall say to you, and observe it as you ought.

S. O heavens, how have you increased our longing to hear, what may be of such very great importance to us!

O. C. It is certainly of the greatest that can be.

S. Explain it then to us immediately, we beseech you; and be assured, that we will listen to you with all the care and attention, that a matter which concerns us so greatly must demand.

O. C. You see this grand inclosure. All this circuit, is the CIRCUIT OF HUMAN LIFE, and that great number of people standing before the portal, are those who are to enter into life. This aged person, who stands by the entrance holding a paper in one of his hands, and pointing with the other, is the GENIUS who directs all that are going in, what they should do after they are entered into life; and shews them which way they ought to take in order to be happy in it.

S. And which is the way that he shews them? where is it?

O. C. Do you see that seat on the other side, before the portal; and the woman sitting on it, with a cup in her hand? She who is so finely dressed out, and makes so plausible an appearance?

S. I see her; and pray who is she?

O. C. She is DECEIT, the misleader of man.

S. And what does she do there?

O. C. As they are entering into life, she offers them to drink of her cup.

S. And what does her cup contain?

O. C. Ignorance and error; of which when they have drunk, they enter into life.

S. And do all drink of this cup?

O. C. All drink of it; but some more, and some less. A little farther, within the portal, don't you see a company of loose women, with a great deal of variety both in their dress and airs?

S. I see them.

O. C. Those are the OPINIONS, DESIRES, and PLEASURES; who, as the multitude enter, fly to them; embrace each of them with great earnestness; and then lead them away with them.

S. And whither do they lead them?

O. C. Some to the way of safety; and others, to perdition through their folly.

S. Ah, why did they drink of that liquor before they came in?

O. C. All of them alike tell those whom they are embracing, that they will lead them to what is best, and will make their lives quite happy; whilst the new comers, blinded by the large draughts they have taken from the cup of DECEIT, [redacted]

of distinguishing which is the true way in life; and wander about inconsiderately, here and there, as you see they do. You may observe too, that they who have been in some time, go about just as these direct them.

S. They do so. But, pray, who is that woman who seems to be both blind and mad, and who stands on that round stone there?

O. C. That is FORTUNE; and she is really not only mad and blind, but deaf too.

S. What then can her business be?

O. C. She flies about every where, and snatches what he has from one, to give it to another; and then takes it away again from him, to give it to a third; without any manner of meaning, or any degree of certainty: which latter is very aptly signified by her figure here.

S. How so?

O. C. By her standing on that round stone, which shew that there is no stability or security in her favours; as all who trust to her find, by some great and unexpected fall.

S. And what does all that company about her want of her? and how are they called?

O. C. They are called, THE INCONSIDERATES, and are begging for some of those things which she flings about her.

S. And why do they appear with such a diversity of passions? some of them as overjoyed, and others as very much distrest?

O. C. They who smile and rejoice, are such as have received something from her hand; and these call her by the title of GOOD FORTUNE: and such as weep and mourn, are they from whom she has

resumed what she had before given them; and these call her BAD FORTUNE.

S. And what is it she gives, that should make the former rejoice so much on the receiving it, and the latter lament so much at the loss of it?

O. C. All those things which the greater part of mankind think good, such as wealth, and glory, and nobility, and offspring, and dignities, and crowns; and all such sort of things.

S. And are not these really good things?

O. C. As to that we may talk more at large another time; but at present, if you please, let us stick to our picture. You see then, after entering this portal, there is another inclosure, on a raised ground, and several women standing before it, dressed out too, much like ladies of pleasure.

S. They are so.

O. C. Of these, this is INTEMPERANCE; that LUXURY; this is AVARICE; and that other FLATTERY.

S. And what do they stand there for?

O. C. They are waiting for those who have received any thing from FORTUNE; and as they meet with them, they embrace them with the greatest fondness, attach themselves to them, do every thing they can to please them, and beg them to stay with them; promise them to render their whole lives delightful, easy, and free from all manner of care or trouble. Now whoever is carried away by them to VOLUPTUOUSNESS, will find their company agreeable to him at first, whilst they are fondling and tickling his passions; but it is soon quite otherwise; for when he recovers his senses, he perceives that he did not enjoy them,

but was enjoyed by them; and that they prey on him, and destroy him. And when he has, by their means, consumed all that he had received from FORTUNE, then is he obliged to become their slave, to bear all the insults they are pleased to impose upon him, to yield to all the most scandalous practices, and in the end, to commit all sorts of villanies for their sake; such as betraying, defrauding, robbing, sacrilege, perjury, and the like: and when all these fail him, then is he given up to PUNISHMENT.

S. And where is she?

O. C. Don't you see there, a little behind those women, a narrow dark cavern, with a small sort of door to it, and some miserable women that appear within, clad only in filth and rags?

S. I see them.

O. C. She who holds up the scourge in her hand, is PUNISHMENT; this, with her head sunk almost down to her knees, is SORROW; and that other tearing her hair, is ANGUISH OF MIND.

S. And pray, who is that meagre figure of a man without any clothes on, just by them? and that lean woman, that resembles him so much in her make and face?

O. C. Those are REPINING, and his sister DESPAIR. To all these is the wretch I was speaking of delivered up, and lives with them in torments, till finally he is cast into the house of MISERY; where he passes the remainder of his days in all kinds of wretchedness; unless, by chance, REPENTANCE should fall in his way.

S. What happens then?

O. C. If REPENTANCE should chance to meet with him, she will take him out of the evil situation he was in, and will place a different OPINION and DESIRE before him: one, of those which lead to TRUE SCIENCE; and the other, of those which lead to SCIENCE falsely so called.

S. And what then?

O. S. If he embraces that which leads to TRUE SCIENCE, he is renewed and saved, and becomes a happy man for all his days; but if the other, he is bewildered again by FALSE SCIENCE.

S. Good Heaven! what a new danger do you tell me of! And pray, which is FALSE SCIENCE?

O. C. Do you see that second inclosure?

S. Very plainly.

O. C. And don't you see a woman standing without the inclosure, just by the entrance into it, of a very striking appearance, and very well dressed?

S. As plainly.

O. C. That is she whom the multitude, and all the unthinking part of mankind, call by the name of Science; though she is really FALSE SCIENCE. Now those who are saved out of the house of Misery call in here, in their passage to TRUE SCIENCE.

S. Is there then no other way to TRUE SCIENCE but this?

O. C. Yes, there is.

S. And pray who are those men that are walking to and fro within the inclosure?

O. C. Those who have attached themselves to False Science, mistaking her for the True.

S. And what are they?

O. C. Some of them are poets, some rhetoricians, some logicians, some students in music, arithmetick, and geometry; pleasurists, peripateticks, criticks, and several others of the same rank.

S. And who are those women who seem so busy among them, and are so like Intemperance and her companions, in the first inclosure?

O. C. They are the very same.

S. Are they then admitted into this second inclosure?

O. C. Yes indeed; but not so readily, or frequently, as in the first.

S. And are the OPINIONS too admitted?

O. C. Undoubtedly; for the persons who belong to this inclosure, have not yet got rid of the draught which they took out of the cup of Deceit.

S. What then, IGNORANCE remains still with them?

O. C. That it does, and FOLLY too; nor can they get rid of the Opinions, nor all the rest of this vile train, till they quit False Science, and get into the way of the True; till they drink of her purifying liquor, and wash away all the dregs of the evils that remain in them; which that, and that only, is capable of doing. Such therefore as fix their abode with False Science will never be delivered; nor can all their studies clear them from any one of those evils.

S. Which then is the way to True Science?

O. C. Do you see that place on high there, that looks as if it were uninhabited?

S. I do.

O. C. And do you discern a little opening between the rocks, and a small track leading to it, which is scarce beaten; and with very few people walking in it, as it is all rough, and stony, and difficult?

S. I discern it very plainly.

O. C. And don't you see a high cliff on the hill, almost inaccessible, and with several precipices about it?

S. I see it.

O. C. That is the way which leads to TRUE SCIENCE.

S. It is frightful only to look upon it.

O. C. And up above that cliff, don't you see a large rising rock, all surrounded with precipices?

S. I see it.

O. C. Then you see also the two women that stand upon it, with so much firmness and beauty in their make, and how earnestly they extend their hands.

S. I do so; and pray who are they?

O. C. Those two are sisters, and are called TEMPERANCE and PERSEVERANCE.

S. And why do they extend their hands so earnestly?

O. C. They are encouraging those who are arrived to that rock, and calling out to them to be of good heart, and not to despond, because they have but a little more to suffer, and then will find the road all easy and pleasant before them.

S. But how can they ever get up upon that rock itself? for I don't see any the least path to ascend it by.

O. C. The two sisters descend to meet them, and help them up. Then they order them to rest a little, inspire them with new strength and resolution, and promise to conduct them to True Science; point out the way to them, make them observe how even, and easy, and charming it is; and how free from all manner of difficulty or danger, as you see is represented here.

S. How well does it answer the description!

O. C. You see before that grove, the ground that extends itself into a beautiful meadow, with such a lively light over it.

S. Very plainly.

O. C. Then you see the third inclosure, in the midst of that meadow, and the portal to it?

S. I do so; and pray, what do you call this place?

O. C. The habitation of the blest; for here it is that HAPPINESS, and all the VIRTUES dwell.

S. What a charming place have they to dwell in!

O. C. And do you observe the lady near the portal, with so beautiful and steady a look; of a middle age, or rather a little past it, and dressed in a plain long robe, without any the least affectation of ornaments? She is standing there, not on a round stone, but a square one, firmly fixed in the ground; and by her are two other women, who look as if they were her daughters.

S. They do so.

O. C. Of these, she in the midst is SCIENCE, and the other two are TRUTH and PERSUASION.

S. And why does Science stand on that square stone?

O. C. To signify that her ways are ways of certainty, and that the presents which she gives to those that arrive to her, are firm and lasting.

S. And what is that she gives to them?

O. C. Strength and tranquillity of mind, arising from a full assurance, that they shall never undergo any evil again in their whole lives.

S. O heavens, how desirable are her presents! But why does she stand thus without the inclosure?

O. C. To receive those that arrive thither, and give them to drink of her purifying liquor, and to conduct them into the presence of the VIRTUES within, when they are thoroughly cleansed by it.

S. I dont rightly understand what you mean by this cleansing.

O. C. I will make that clearer to you. Suppose any friend of yours was afflicted with some dangerous fit of illness; if he goes to some knowing physician, and takes what he prescribes, in order to root out the causes of his disease, he may be restored to a perfect state of health; but if he refuses to take what is ordered him, his physician will give him up, and leave him to be destroyed by his distemper.

S. That is clear enough.

O. C. In the very same manner, when any one comes to SCIENCE, she takes him under her care, and gives him a draught of her cup to cleanse him, and drive out all the noxious things that are in him.

S. And what are those noxious things?

O. C. The error and ignorance that he drank out of the cup of DECEIT; and his arrogance, and

lust, and intemperance, and anger, and covetousness; in short, all the evil impressions and habits that he had contracted in his passage through the first inclosure.

S. And when she has cleansed him from all these, whither does she send him?

O. C. In through that portal, to KNOWLEDGE, and the other VIRTUES.

S. And where are they?

O. C. Don't you see, within the portal, a select company of ladies, of singular beauty and decency, both in their look and dress; and in a word, with every thing handsome, and nothing affected about them?

S. I see them, and should be glad to know their names.

O. C. That at the head of them is KNOWLEDGE, and the rest are all her sisters, FORTITUDE, JUSTICE, HONESTY, PRUDENCE, DECENCY, FREEDOM, TEMPERANCE, and CLEMENCY.

S. What beauties they are! and what a longing desire do they inspire one with to enjoy their companies!

O. C. That you may do, if you are wise enough to follow the way that I have shewn you.

S. That will I strive to do as far as I am able.

O. C. Then you will arrive safely to them.

S. And when these have received any one, whither do they carry him?

O. C. To their mother.

S. And who is she?

O. C. HAPPINESS.

S. And where?

O. C. Do you see the way which leads to that high edifice, which appears above all the inclosures, as a citadel does above all the buildings in a city?

S. Yes.

O. C. And do you see that composed, beautiful lady, sitting on a throne in the portico to it, with so easy and disengaged an air, and with that beautiful chaplet of fresh flowers on her head?

S. How beautiful does she look!

O. C. She is HAPPINESS.

S. And when any one arrives to her, what does she do to him?

O. C. HAPPINESS, assisted by all the Virtues, crowns him with her own influences: in the same manner as they are crowned, who have obtained the greatest conquests.

S. But what conquests has he obtained?

O. C. The greatest conquests, and over the most terrible of monsters, which formerly devoured and tormented, and enslaved him. All these has he conquered, and driven from him; and is become so much master both of himself and them, as to make those things obey him, which he himself obeyed before.

S. I don't yet comprehend what monsters you mean; and should be very glad to know.

O. C. In the first place, his ignorance and error; will you not allow them to be monsters?

S. Yes, and very dangerous ones too.

O. C. Then, his sorrows, and repinings, and covetings, and intemperance, and every thing that

is bad. All these has he subdued, and is not subdued by them as he used to be.

S. O glorious exploits! and most noble of all victories! But be so good as to infrom me yet farther, what may be the influence of the crown, with which you were saying he was to be crowned?

O. C. It is that which renders him happy: for he who has it once on his head, immediately becomes easy and blest; and does not place his hopes of happiness in any thing without him, but possesses it in his own breast.

S. How desirable is such an acquisition! And after he is crowned, what does he do? or whither does he go?

O. C. The VIRTUES take him, and lead him to the place that he had left, and bid him observe those who continue there, amidst what difficulties and troubles they pass their time; and how they are shipwrecked in life, or wander about in it; or are conquered and led along like captives, some by INTEMPERANCE, and others by ARROGANCE; here by COVETOUSNESS, and there by VAIN-GLORY, or any other of the VICES: whose chains they are in vain striving to get loose from, that they might escape and get to this place of rest: so that their whole life seems to be nothing but one ineffectual struggle. And all this they suffer from their mistaking the right way, and forgetting the orders given them by the directing GENIUS.

S. That appears to me to be the case; but I don't so clearly see, why the VIRTUES lead the person that has been crowned, back to the place that he had left.

O. C. Because he had never formed a full and exact idea of the things that passed there, but at best had only guessed and doubted about them: for, from the draught of ignorance and error that he had taken at his entrance, he had imagined things that were bad to be good, and things that were good to be bad; by which means he had lived wretchedly, as indeed all do while they are there. But now that he has obtained the knowledge of what is really good, he can both live happily himself, and can see how very unhappy the others are.

S. And when he has taken a full view there, what does he do, or whither does he go?

O. C. Wherever he pleases, for every where is he as safe as one that is got into the Corycian cave; so that wheresoever he goes, he lives in full security, and undisturbed happiness; and is received by all others with as much pleasure as a good physician is by his patients.

S. And has he no longer any dread of those females which you called monsters? nor any apprehension of being hurt by them?

O. C. Not in the least; for he will never any more be molested either by ANGUISH or SORROW, or INTEMPERANCE, or COVETOUSNESS, or POVERTY, or any other evil; for he is now master of them all, and superior to every thing that formerly gave him any trouble. As they who practise the catching of vipers, are never hurt by the bite of those creatures, which is so venomous and even mortal to others, because they have an antidote against their poison; so he is safe from any in-

fluence of all these evils, because he has the antidote against them.

S. That you have explained to me very well; but I beg you will tell me yet farther, who they are that are descending from the middle of the rock, some of them crowned, and with an air of joy on their countenances; and others without crowns, that seem to have been rejected, and have the marks of several falls about them, and are followed by certain women.

O. C. They who are crowned, are such as got safe to SCIENCE, and are delighted with the reception that she has given them; and those without crowns, who seem to have been rejected by her, and are returned in so bad a condition, are such as found their hearts fail them, when they came to the precipice where PATIENCE stands; and turned back from that point, and are now wandering irregularly they know not whither.

S. And who are the women that are following them?

O. C. They are SORROW and ANGUISH, and DESPAIR, and INFAMY, and IGNORANCE.

S. By your account they are attended by every thing that is bad!

O. C. Undoubtedly they are, but when they are got down into the first inclosure, to VOLUPTUOUSNESS and INTEMPERANCE, they don't lay the blame on themselves, but immediately say all the ill things they can of SCIENCE, and of those who are going to her; and tell how miserable and wretched those poor people are, and how much they suffer, who leave the life they might have enjoyed below, and the good things bestowed there.

S. And what are the good things which they mean?

O. C. Luxury and Intemperance, to say all in two words; for to indulge their passions like brute beasts, is what they look upon as the completion of all their happiness.

S. And those other women that are coming down there, who look so gay and so well pleased with themselves, what are they?

O. C. The OPINIONS, who, after conducting those to SCIENCE, who have gained admission to the VIRTUES, are returning to bring up others, and to acquaint them how happy those are whom they have already conducted up thither.

S. And have they been admitted to the VIRTUES themselves?

O. C. By no means; for 'tis not allowable for OPINION to enter, where KNOWLEDGE has her dwelling. Their business therefore was only to conduct them to SCIENCE; and when she has received them, they turn back again to bring others; like transport-ships, which as soon as they have delivered one freight, return for another.

S. You have now, I think, very well explained all the figures in the picture; but you have not yet told us what directions they were, which the Genius at the first portal gives to those that are entering into life.

O. C. He bids them be of good courage. Wherefore be you also of good courage; for I will tell you the whole, and leave no one thing unexplained to you.

S. We shall be extremely obliged to you.

O. C. You see that blind woman there on the round stone, who I told you before was FORTUNE?

S. I see her.

O. C. As to that woman, he orders them not to place any confidence in her, nor to look on any of her gifts as firm or secure, nor to consider them as their property; for there is no hindering her from resuming them, and giving them to any body else; and 'tis what she is extremely apt to do. He therefore orders them to regard all her presents with indifference, and not to rejoice if she makes them any, nor be dejected if she takes them away, and to think neither well nor ill of her; for whatever she does is done without thought, and all by mere chance and accident, as I have acquainted you already. 'Tis on this account that the Genius commands them, not to attach themselves to any thing she can give; nor to be like those simple bankers, who when they have received any sum of money in trust, are apt to be pleased with it, and look upon it as their own; and, when they are called upon to repay it, grow uneasy, and think it very hard; not considering that it was deposited in their hands on that very condition, that the true owners might demand it again whenever they pleased. Just thus the Genius commands men to look upon all the gifts of FORTUNE: and to be aware that she may recal them whenever she has a fancy to do it; or may send in more, and, if she pleases, may resume that and the former all together. He therefore commands those who are entering into life, to receive

whatever she offers them, and, as soon as they have received it, to go on in quest of a more lasting acquisition.

S. What acquisition do you mean?

O. C. That which they may obtain from SCIENCE, if they can arrive safe to her.

S. And what is that she gives them?

O. C. The true knowledge of what is really good, and the firm, certain, and unchangeable possession of it. He therefore commands them to quit Fortune immediately, in pursuit of this; and when they come to those women, who, as I told you before, were INTEMPERANCE and VOLUPTUOUSNESS, to leave them too directly, and not to mind whatever they can say; but to go on for the inclosure of FALSE SCIENCE; there he bids them stay a little while, to get what may be useful to them on the rest of their road, and then to leave her directly too, and go on for TRUE SCIENCE. These are the orders which the GENIUS gives to all that enter into life; and whoever transgresses or neglects them will be a miserable wretch. I have now explained the whole of the parable contained in this painting; but if you have any particular question to ask in relation to any thing that I have said, I am very ready to answer it.

S. We are much obliged to you. Pray then, what is it that the GENIUS orders them to get in the inclosure of Science, falsely so called?

O. C. Whatever may be of use to them.

S. And what is there, that may be of use to them?

O. C. Literature, and so much of the sciences

as Plato says may serve people in the beginning of their lives as a bridle, to keep them from being drawn away by idler pursuits.

S. And is it necessary for all who would arrive at True Science, to do this?

O. C. No, it is not necessary, but it may be useful; though, in truth, these things themselves do not contribute towards making them the better men.

S. Not contribute at all towards making them better!

O. C. Not at all, for they may be as good without them. And yet they are not wholly unuseful; for they may sometimes help us, as interpreters do, to the meaning of a language we don't understand: but, after all, 'tis better to understand the language ourselves, than to have any need of an interpreter; and we may be good, without the assistance of learning.

S. In what then have the learned any advantage over others towards becoming better men?

O. C. Why do you imagine they should have any advantage; since you see they are deceived like others, as to what is good or bad; and continue to be as much involved in all manner of vices? for there is nothing that hinders a man, who is a master of literature, and knowing in all the sciences, from being at the same time a drunkard, or intemperate, or covetous, or unjust, or villainous, or, in one word, imprudent in all his ways.

S. 'Tis true, we see too many instances of such.

O. C. Of what advantage then is their learning, toward making them better men?

S. You have made it appear, that it is of none; but pray what is the reason of it?

O. C. The reason is this: that when they are got into the second inclosure, they fix there as if they were arrived at True Science. And what can they get by that? since we see several persons, who go on directly from Intemperance, and the other Vices in the first inclosure, to the inclosure of True Science, without ever calling in where these learned persons have taken up their abode. How then can the learned be said to have any advantage over them? On the contrary, they are less apt to exert themselves, or to be instructed, than the former.

S. How can that be?

O. C. Because they who are in the second inclosure, not to mention any other of their faults, at least profess to know what they do not know: so that they acquiesce in their ignorance, and have no motive to stir them up toward the seeking of True Science. Besides, do you not observe another thing; that the Opinions, from the first inclosure, enter in among them, and converse with them, as freely as with the former? so that they are not at all better even than they; unless Repentance should come to them, and should convince them, that it is not Science they have been embracing all this while; but only the false appearance of her, which has deceived them. But while they continue in the same mind they are in, there is no hope left for them. To close all, my friends, what I would entreat of you is, to think over every thing I have said to you, to weigh it

well in your minds, and to practise accordingly. Get a habit of doing right, whatever pain it costs you; let no difficulties deter you, in the way to VIRTUE: and account every thing else despicable, in comparison of this. Then will the lesson that I have taught you, prove to yourselves a lesson of HAPPINESS.

A

DISSERTATION

UPON

THE GREEK COMEDY,

TRANSLATED FROM BRUMOY *.

ADVERTISEMENT.

I CONCLUDE this work according to my promise, with an account of the Comick Theatre, and intreat the reader, whether a favourer or an enemy of the ancient Drama, not to pass his censure upon the authors or upon me, without a regular perusal of this whole work. For, though it seems

* Published by Mrs Lennox in 4to, 1759. To the third volume of this work the following Advertisement is prefixed. "In this volume, the Discourse on the Greek Comedy, and the General Conclusion, are translated by the celebrated author of the Rambler. The Comedy of the Birds, and that of Peace, by a young Gentleman. The Comedy of the Frogs, by the learned and ingenious Dr Gregory Sharpe. The Discourse upon the Cyclops, by John Bourrya, Esq. The Cyclops, by Dr Grainger, author of the translation of Tibullus." E.

to be composed of pieces of which each may precede or follow without dependance upon the other, yet all the parts, taken together, form a system which would be destroyed by their disjunction. Which way shall we come at the knowledge of the ancients' shews, but by comparing together all that is left of them? The value and necessity of this comparison determined me to publish all, or to publish nothing. Besides, the reflections on each piece, and on the general taste of antiquity, which, in my opinion, are not without importance, have a kind of obscure gradation, which I have carefully endeavoured to preserve, and of which the thread would be lost by him who should slightly glance sometimes upon one piece, and sometimes upon another. It is a structure which I have endeavoured to make as near to regularity as I could, and which must be seen in its full extent and in proper succession. The reader who skips here and there over the book, might make a hundred objections which are either anticipated, or answered in those pieces which he might have overlooked. I have laid such stress upon the connection of the parts of this work, that I have declined to exhaust the subject, and have suppressed many of my notions, that I might leave the judicious reader to please himself by forming such conclusions as I supposed him like to discover, as well as myself. I am not here attempting to prejudice the reader by an apology either for the ancients, or my own manner. I have not claimed a right of obliging others to determine, by my opinion, the degrees of esteem which I think due to the authors of the Athenian Stage; nor do I think that their repu-

tation in the present time, ought to depend upon my mode of thinking or expressing my thoughts, which I leave entirely to the judgment of the publick.

A

DISSERTATION, &c.

I. I WAS in doubt a long time, whether I should meddle at all with the Greek comedy, both because the pieces which remain are very few, the licentiousness of Aristophanes, their author, is exhorbitant, and it is very difficult to draw from the performances of a single poet, a just idea of Greek comedy. Besides, it seemed that tragedy was sufficient to employ all my attention, that I might give a complete representation of that kind of writing, which was most esteemed by the Athenians and the wiser Greeks *, particularly by Socrates, who set no value upon comedy or comick actors. But the very name of that drama, which in polite ages, and above all others in our own, has been so

Reasons why Aristophanes may be reviewed without translating him entirely.

* There was a law which forbad any judge of the Areopagus to write comedy.

much advanced, that it has become equal to tragedy, if not preferable, incline me to think that I may be partly reproached with an imperfect work, if, after having gone as deep as I could into the nature of Greek tragedy, I did not at least sketch a draught of the comedy.

I then considered, that it was not wholly impossible to surmount, at least in part, the difficulties which had stopt me, and to go somewhat farther than the learned writers *, who have published in French some pieces of Aristophanes; not that I pretend to make large translations. The same reasons which have hindered with respect to the more noble parts of the Greek drama, operate with double force upon my present subject. Though ridicule, which is the business of comedy, be not less uniform in all times, than the passions which are moved by tragick compositions; yet, if diversity of manners may sometimes disguise the passions themselves, how much greater change will be made in jocularities? The truth is, that they are so much changed by the course of time, that pleasantry and ridicule become dull and flat much more easily than the pathetick becomes ridiculous.

That which is commonly known by the term jocular and comick, is nothing but a turn of expression, an airy phantom, that must be caught at a particular point. As we lose this point, we lose the jocularity, and find nothing but dulness in its place. A lucky sally, which has filled a company with laughter, will have no effect in print, because

* Madame Dacier, M. Boivin.

it is shewn single and separate from the circumstance which gave it force. Many satirical jests, found in ancient books, have had the same fate; their spirit has evaporated by time, and have left nothing to us but insipidity. None but the most biting passages have preserved their points unblunted.

But, besides this objection, which extends universally to all translations of Aristophanes, and many allusions of which time has deprived us, there are loose expressions thrown out to the populace to raise laughter from corrupt passions, which are unworthy of the curiosity of decent readers, and which ought to rest eternally in proper obscurity. Not every thing in this infancy of comedy was excellent, at least it would not appear excellent at this distance of time, in comparison of compositions of the same kind, which lie before our eyes; and this is reason enough to save me the trouble of translating, and the reader that of perusing. As for that small number of writers who delight in those delicacies, they give themselves very little trouble about translations, except it be to find fault with them; and the majority of people of wit, like comedies that may give them pleasure, without much trouble of attention, and are not much disposed to find beauties in that which requires long deductions to find it beautiful. If Helen had not appeared beautiful to the Greeks and Trojans but by force of argument, we had never been told of the Trojan war.

On the other side, Aristophanes is an author more considerable than one would imagine. The History of Greece could not pass over him, when

it comes to touch upon the people of Athens; this alone might procure him respect, even when he was not considered as a comick poet. But when his writings are taken into view, we find him the only author from whom may be drawn a just idea of the comedy of his age; and farther, we find in his pieces, that he often makes attacks upon the tragick writers, particularly upon the three chief, whose valuable remains we have had under examination; and, what is yet worse, fell sometimes upon the state, and upon the gods themselves.

The chief heads of this discourse.

II. These considerations have determined me to follow, in my representation of this writer, the same method which I have taken in several tragick pieces, which is that of giving an exact analysis as far as the matter would allow, from which I deduce four important systems. First, Upon the nature of the comedy of that age, without omitting that of Menander *. Secondly, Upon the vices and go-

* Menander, an Athenian, son of Diopethes and Hegestrates, was apparently the most eminent of the writers of the new comedy. He had been a scholar of Theophrastus: his passion for the women brought infamy upon him: he was squint-eyed, and very lively. Of the one hundred and eighty comedies, or according to Suidas, the eighty which he composed, and which are all said to be translated by Terence, we have now only a few fragments remaining. He flourished about the 115th Olympiad, 318 years before the Christian Æra. He was drowned as he was bathing in the port of Pireus. I have told in another place, what is said of one Philemon, his antagonist, not so good a poet as himself, but one who often gained the prize. This Philemon was older than him, and was much in fashion in the time of Alexander the Great. He expressed all his wishes in two lines, 'To have health, and

vernment of the Athenians. Thirdly, Upon the notion we ought to entertain of Aristophanes, with respect to Eschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Fourthly, Upon the jest which he makes upon the gods. These things will not be treated in order, as a regular discourse seems to require, but will arise sometimes separately, sometimes together, from the view of each particular comedy, and from the reflections which this free manner of writing will allow. I shall conclude with a short view of the whole, and so finish my design.

III. I shall not repeat here what Madame Dacier, and so many others before her, have collected of all that can be known relating to the history of comedy. Its beginnings are as obscure as those of tragedy, and there is an appearance that we take these two words in a more extensive meaning; they had both the same original, that is, they began among the festivals of the vintage, and were not distinguished from one another but by a burlesque or serious chorus, which made all the soul and all the body. But, if we give these words a stricter sense, according to the History of comedy.

'fortune, and pleasure, and never to be in debt, is all I de-'sire.' He was very covetous, and was pictured with his fingers hooked, so that he set his comedies at a high price. He lived about a hundred years, some say a hundred and one. Many tales are told of his death; Valerius Maximus says, that he died with laughing at a little incident: seeing an ass eating his figs, he ordered his servant to drive her away; the man made no great haste, and the ass eat them all. 'Well 'done, says Philemon, now give her some wine.' Apuleius and Quintilian placed this writer much below Menander, but give him the second place.

notion which has since been formed, comedy was produced after tragedy, and was in many respects a sequel and imitation of the works of Eschylus. It is in reality nothing more than an action set before the sight by the same artifice of representation. Nothing is different but the object, which is merely ridicule. This original of true comedy will be easily admitted, if we take the word of Horace, who must have known better than us the true dates of dramatick works. This poet supports the system which I have endeavoured to establish in the second discourse * so strongly as to amount to demonstrative proof.

Horace † expresses himself thus, "Thespis is "said to have been the first inventor of a species "of tragedy, in which he carried about in carts, "players smeared with the dregs of wine, of whom "some sung and others declaimed." This was the first attempt both of tragedy and comedy; for Thespis made use only of one speaker, without the least appearance of dialogue. "Eschylus afterwards exhibited them with more dignity. He "placed them on a stage, somewhat above the "ground, covered their faces with masks, put buskins on their feet, dressed them in trailing robes, "and made them speak in a more lofty style." Horace omits invention of dialogue, which we learn from Aristotle ‡. But, however, it may be well enough inferred from the following words of Horace; this completion is mentioned while he speaks of Eschylus, and therefore to Eschylus it must be

* Greek Theatre, part i. vol. i.

† Hor. Poet. v. 275. ‡ Poet. ch. 4.

ascribed: "Then first appeared the old comedy, "with great success in its beginning." Thus we see that the Greek comedy arose after tragedy, and by consequence tragedy was its parent. It was formed in imitation of Eschylus, the inventor of the tragick drama; or, to go yet higher into antiquity, had its original from Homer, who was the guide of Eschylus. For, if we credit Aristotle *, comedy had its birth from the *Margetes*, a satirical poem of Homer, and tragedy from the Iliad and Odyssey. Thus the design and artifice of comedy were drawn from Homer and Eschylus. This will appear less surprising, since the ideas of the human mind are always gradual, and arts are seldom invented but by imitation. The first idea contains the seed of the second; this second, expanding itself, gives birth to a third; and so on. Such is the progress of the mind of man; it proceeds in its productions step by step, in the same manner as nature multiplies her works by imitating, or repeating her own act, when she seems most to run into variety. In this manner it was that comedy had its birth, its increase, its improvement, its perfection, and its diversity.

Who is author of comedy.

IV. But the question is, who was the happy author of that imitation, and that shew, whether only one like Eschylus of tragedy, or whether they were several? for neither Horace, nor any before him, explained this †. This poet only quotes three

* Poet. ch. 4.

† 'The alterations, which have been made in tragedy, 'were perceptible, and the authors of them unknown; but

writers who had reputation in the old Comedy, Eupolis*, Cratinus†, and Aristophanes, of whom he says, 'That they, and others who wrote in the same 'way, reprehended the faults of particular persons 'with excessive liberty.' These are probably the poets of the greatest reputation, though they were not the first, and we know the names of many others‡. Among these three we may be sure

'comedy has lain in obscurity, being not cultivated, like 'tragedy, from the time of its original: for it was long before 'the magistrates began to give comick choruses. It was first 'exhibited by actors, who played voluntarily, without orders 'of the magistrates. From the time that it began to take 'some settled form, we know its authors, but are not in-'formed who first used masks, added prologues, increased 'the numbers of the actors, and joined all the other things 'which now belong to it. The first that thought of form-'ing comick fables were Epicharmus and Phormys, and con-'sequently this manner came from Sicily: Crates was the 'first Athenian that adopted it, and forsook the practice of 'gross raillery that prevailed before.' Aristot. ch. 5. Crates flourished in the 82d Olympiad, 450 years before our Æra, twelve or thirteen years before Aristophanes.

* Eupolis was an Athenian; his death, which we shall mention presently, is represented differently by authors, who almost all agree that he was drowned. Elian adds an incident which deserves to be mentioned: he says (book x. Of Animals), that one Augeas of Eleusis, made Eupolis a present of a fine mastif, who was so faithful to his master as to worry to death a slave who was carrying away some of his comedies. He adds, that when the poet died at Egene, his dog staid by his tomb till he perished by grief and hunger.

† Cratinus of Athens, who was son of Callimedes, died at the age of ninety-seven. He composed twenty comedies, of which nine had the prize: he was a daring writer, but a cowardly warrior.

‡ Hertelius has collected the sentences of fifty Greek poets of the different ages of comedy.

that Aristophanes had the greatest character, since not only the king of Persia * expressed a high esteem of him to the Grecian ambassadors, as of a man extremely useful to his country, and Plato † rated him so high, as to say, that the graces resided in his bosom; but likewise because he is the only writer of whom any comedies have made their way down to us, through the confusion of times. There are not indeed any proofs that he was the inventor of comedy, properly so called, especially since he had not only predecessors who wrote in the same kind, but it is at least a sign, that he had contributed more than any other to bring comedy to the perfection in which he left it. We shall, therefore, not inquire farther, whether regular comedy was the work of a single mind, which seems yet to be unsettled, or of several contemporaries, such as these which Horace quotes. We must distinguish three forms which comedy wore, in consequence of the genius of the writers, or of the laws of the magistrates, and the change of the government of many into that of few.

That comedy‡, which Horace calls the ancient, and which, according to his account, was after Eschylus, retained something of its original state, and of the licentiousness which it practised, while it was yet without regularity, and utterred loose

The old, middle, and new comedy.

* Interlude of the second act of the comedy intitled *The Acharniens*.

† Epigram attributed to Plato.

‡ This history of the three ages of comedy, and their different characters, is taken in part from the valuable fragments of Platonius.

jokes and abuse upon the passers-by from the cart of Thespis. Though it was now properly modelled, as might have been worthy of a great theatre and a numerous audience, and deserved the name of a regular comedy, it was not yet much nearer to decency. It was a representation of real actions, and exhibited the dress, the motions, and the air, as far as could be done in a mask, of any one who was thought proper to be sacrificed to publick scorn. In a city so free, or to say better, so licentious as Athens was at that time, nobody was spared, not even the chief magistrate, nor the very judges, by whose voice comedies were allowed or prohibited. The insolence of those performances reached to open impiety, and sport was made equally with men and gods *. These are the features by which the greatest part of the compositions of Aristophanes will be known. In which it may be particularly observed, that not the least appearance of praise will be found, and therefore certainly no trace of flattery or servility.

This licentiousness of the poets, to which in some sort Socrates fell a sacrifice, at last was restrained by a law. For the government, which was before shared by all the inhabitants, was now confined to a settled number of citizens. It was ordered that no man's name should be mentioned on the stage; but poetical malignity was not long in finding the secret of defeating the purpose of the law, and of making themselves ample compensation for the restraint laid upon authors, by the necessity of inventing false names. They set themselves to work upon known and real characters, so they had now

* It will be shewn how and in what sense this was allowed.

the advantage of giving a more exquisite gratification to the vanity of poets, and the malice of spectators. One had the refined pleasure of setting others to guess, and the other that of guessing right by naming the masks. When pictures are so like, that the name is not wanted, nobody inscribes it. The consequence of the law, therefore, was nothing more than to make that done with delicacy, which was done grossly before; and the art, which was expected would be confined within the limits of duty, was only partly transgressed with more ingenuity. Of this Aristophanes, who was comprehended in this law, gives us good examples in some of his poems. Such was that which was afterwards called the middle comedy.

The new comedy, or that which followed, was again an excellent refinement, prescribed by the magistrates, who, as they had before forbid the use of real names, forbad afterwards real subjects, and the train of choruses*, too much given to abuse: so that the poets saw themselves reduced to the necessity of bringing imaginary names and subjects upon the stage, which at once purified and enriched the theatre; for comedy from that time was no longer a fury armed with torches, but a pleasing and innocent mirror of human life.

Chacun peint avec art dans ce nouveau miroir
S'y vit avec plaisir, ou crut ne s'y pas voir!
L'avare des premiers rit du tableau fidelle
D'un avare souvent tracé sur son modelle;
Et mille fois un fat finement exprimé
Méconnut le portrait sur lui-même formé †.

* Perhaps the chorus was forbid in the middle age of the comedy. Platonius seems to say so.

† *Despreaux Art. Poet. chant.* 8.

The comedy of *Menander* and *Terence* is, in propriety of speech, the fine comedy. I do not repeat all this after so many writers but just to recal it to memory, and to add to what they have said, something which they have omitted, a singular effect of publick edicts appearing in the successive progress of the art. A naked history of poets and of poetry, such as has been often given, is a mere body whout soul, unless it be enlivened with an account of the birth, progress, and perfection of the art, and of the causes by which they were produced.

VI. To omit nothing essential which concerns this part, we shall say a word of the *Latin* comedy. When the arts passed from Greece to Rome, comedy took its turn among the rest: but the Romans applied themselves only to the new species, without chorus or personal abuse; though perhaps they might have played some translations of the old or the middle comedy, for Pliny gives an account of one which was represented in his own time. But the Roman comedy, which was modelled upon the last species of the Greek, hath nevertheless its different ages, according as its authors were rough or polished. The pieces of Livius Andronicus *, more ancient and less refined than those of the writers who learned the art from him, may be said to compose the first age, or the old Roman comedy and tragedy. To him you must join Nevius his contemporay, and Ennius, who lived some years after him. The second age com-

The Latin comedy.

* The year of Rome 514, the first year of the 135th Olympiad.

prises Pacuvius, Cecilius, Accius, and Plautus, unless it shall be thought better to reckon Plautus with Terence, to make the third and highest age of the Latin comedy, which may properly be called the new comedy, especially with regard to Terence, who was the friend of Lelius, and the faithful copier of Menander.

But the Romans, without troubling themselves with this order of succession, distinguished their comedies by the dresses * of the players. The robe called *prætexta*, with large borders of purple, being the formal dress of magistrates in their dignity, and in the exercise of their office, the actors, who had this dress, gave its name to the comedy. This is the same with that called *Trabeata* †, from *Trabea*, the dress of the consuls in peace, and the generals in triumph. The second species introduced the senators not in great offices, but as private men; this was called *Toges*, fron *Togata*. The last species was named *Tabernaria*, from the tunick, or the common dress of the people, or rather from the mean houses which were painted on the scene. There is no need of mentioning the farces, which took their name and orignal from *Atella*, an ancient town of Campania in Italy, because they differed from the low comedy only by greater licentiousness; nor of those which were called *Palliates*, from the Greek, a cloak, in which the Greek characters were dressed upon the Roman stage, because that habit only distinguished the nation, not the dignity or character, like those which have been mentioned before. To say truth, these are

* *Prætextæ*, *Togatæ*, *Tabernariæ*.

† *Suet. de Claris Grammat.* says, that C. Gelissus, librarian to Augustus, was the author of it.

but trifling distinctions; for, as we shall shew in the following pages, comedy may be more usefully and judiciously distinguished, by the general nature of its subjects. As to the Romans, whether they had, or had not, reason for these names, they have left us so little upon the subject which is come down to us, that we need not trouble ourselves with a distinction, which affords us no solid satisfaction. Plautus and Terence, the only authors of whom we are in possession, give us a fuller notion of the real nature of their comedy, with respect at least to their own times, than can be received from names and terms, from which we have no real exemplification.

VII. Not to go too far out of our way, let us return to Aristophanes, the only poet in whom we can now find the Greek comedy. He is the single writer, whom the violence of time has in some degree spared, after having buried in darkness, and almost in forgetfulness, so many great men, of whom we have nothing but the names and a few fragments, and such slight memorials as are scarcely sufficient to defend them against the enemies of the honour of antiquity; yet these memorials are like the last glimmer of the setting sun, which scarce affords us a weak and fading light: yet from this glimmer we must endeavour to collect rays of sufficient strength to form a picture of the Greek comedy approaching as near as possible to the truth.

The Greek comedy is reduced only to Aristophanes.

Of the personal character of Aristophanes little is known; what account we can give of it must therefore be had from his comedies. It can scarcely be said with certainty of what country he was:

the invectives of his enemies so often called in question his qualification as a citizen, that they have made it doubtful. Some said, he was of Rhodes, others of Egena, a little island in the neighbourhood, and all agreed that he was a stranger. As to himself, he said that he was the son of Philip, and born in the Cydathenian quarter; but he confessed that some of his fortune was in Egena, which was probably the original seat of his family. He was, however, formally declared a citizen of Athens, upon evidence, whether good or bad, upon a decisive judgment, and this for having made his judges merry by an application of a saying of Telemachus *, of which this is the sense: "I am, "as my mother tells me, the son of Philip; for my "own part, I know little of the matter, for what "child knows his own father?" This piece of merriment did him as much good, as Archias received from the oration of Cicero †, who said that that poet was a Roman citizen. An honour which, if he had not inherited by birth, he deserved for his genius.

Aristophanes ‡ flourished in the age of the great men of Greece, particularly of Socrates and Euripides, both of whom he outlived. He made a great figure during the whole Peloponnesian war, not merely as a comick poet by whom the people were diverted, but as the censor of the government, as a man kept in pay by the state to reform it, and almost to act the part of the arbitrator of the publick. A particular account of his comedies

* *Homer, Odyssey.* † *Orat. pro Archia Poeta.*

‡ In the 85th year of the Olympiad, 437 before our Æra, and 317 of the foundation of Rome.

will best let us into his personal character as a poet, and into the nature of his genius, which is what we are most interested to know. It will, however, not be amiss to prepossess our readers a little by the judgment that had been passed upon him by the criticks of our own time, without forgetting one of the ancients that deserves great respect.

Aristophanes censured and praised.

VIII. "Aristophanes," says father Rapin, "is not exact in the contri-"vance of his fables; his fictions are "not probable; he brings real cha-"racters upon the stage too coarsely and too "openly. Socrates, whom he ridicules so much "in his plays, had a more delicate turn of bur-"lesque than himself, and had his merriment with-"out his impudence. It is true, that Aristo-"phanes wrote amidst the confusion and licen-"tiousness of the old comedy, and he was well "acquainted with the humour of the Athenians, "to whom uncommon merit always gave disgust, "and therefore he made the eminent men of his "time the subject of his merriment. But the too "great desire which he had to delight the people "by exposing worthy characters upon the stage, "made him at the same time an unworthy man; "and the turn of his genius to ridicule was dis-"figured and corrupted by the indelicacy and "outrageousness of his manners. After all, his "pleasantry consists chiefly in new-coined puffy "language. The dish of twenty-six syllables, "which he gives in his last scene of his *Female* "*Orators*, would please few tastes in our days. "His language is sometimes obscure, perplexed, "and vulgar, and his frequent play with words,

" his oppositions of contradictory terms, his mix-
" ture of tragick and comick, of serious and bur-
" lesque, are all flat; and his jocularity, if you
" examine it to the bottom, is all false. Menander
" is diverting in a more elegant manner; his style
" is pure, clear, elevated, and natural; he per-
" suades like an orator, and instructs like a philo-
" sopher; and if we may venture to judge upon
" the fragments which remain, it appears that his
" pictures of civil life are pleasing, that he makes
" every one speak according to his character, that
" every man may apply his pictures of life to
" himself, because he always follows nature, and
" feels for the personages which he brings upon
" the stage. To conclude, Plutarch, in his com-
" parison of these authors, says, that the Muse of
" Aristophanes is an abandoned prostitute, and
" that of Menander a modest woman."

It is evident that this whole character is taken from Plutarch. Let us now go on with this remark of father Rapin, since we have already spoken of the Latin comedy, of which he gives us a description.

" With respect to the two Latin comick poets,
" Plautus is ingenius in his designs, happy in his
" conceptions, and fruitful of invention. He has,
" however, according to Horace, some low jocu-
" larities, and those smart sayings, which made
" the vulgar laugh, made him be pitied by men of
" higher taste. It is true, that some of his jests
" are extremely good, but others likewise are very
" bad. To this every man is exposed, who is too
" much determined to make sallies of merriment;
" they endeavour to raise that laughter by hyper-

" boles, which would not arise by a just represen-
" tation of things. Plautus is not quite so regu-
" lar as Terence in the scheme of his designs, or
" in the distribution of his acts, but he is more
" simple in his plot; for the fables of Terence are
" commonly complex, as may be seen in his *An-*
" *drea*, which contains two amours. It was im-
" puted as a fault to Terence, that to bring more
" action upon the stage, he made one Latin co-
" medy out of two Greek; but then Terence
" unravels his plot more naturally than Plautus,
" which Plautus did more naturally than Aristo-
" phanes; and though Cæsar calls Terence but
" one half of Menander, because, though he had
" softness and delicacy, there was in him some
" want of sprightliness and strength; yet he has
" written in a manner so natural and so judicious,
" that, though he was then only a copy, he is
" now an original. No author has ever had a
" more exact sense of pure nature. Of Cecilius,
" since we have only a few fragments, I shall say
" nothing. All that we know of him is told us
" by Varrus, that he was happy in the choice of
" subjects."

Rapin omits many others for the same reason, that we have not enough of their works to qualify us for judges. While we are upon this subject, it will perhaps not displease the reader to see what that critick's opinion is of Lopes de Vega and Moliere. It will appear, that, with respect to Lopes de Vega, he is rather too profuse of praise: that in speaking of Moliere, he is too parsimonious. This piece will, however, be of use to our design, when we shall examine to the bot-

tem what it is that ought to make the character of comedy.

"No man has ever had a greater genius for co-
"medy than Lopes de Vega the Spaniard. He
"had a fertility of wit, joined with great beauty
"of conception, and a wonderful readiness of com-
"position; for he has written more than three
"hundred comedies. His name alone gave repu-
"tation to his pieces; for his reputation was so
"well established, that a work, which came from
"his hands, was sure to claim the approbation of
"the public. He had a mind too extensive to be
"subjected to rules, or restrained by limits. For
"that reason he gave himself up to his own ge-
"nius, on which he could always depend with
"confidence. When he wrote, he consulted no
"other laws than the taste of his auditors, and
"regulated his manner more by the success of his
"work than by the rules of reason. Thus he
"discarded all scruples of unity, and all the super-
"stitions of probability." (This is certainly not said with a design to praise him, and must be connected with that which immediately follows.)
"But as for the most part he endeavours at too
"much jocularity, and carries ridicule to too much
"refinement; his conceptions are often rather
"happy than just, and rather wild than natural;
"for, by subtilizing merriment too far, it becomes
"too nice to be true, and his beauties lose their
"power of striking by being too delicate and
"acute.

"Among us, nobody has carried ridicule in
"comedy farther than Moliere. Our ancient
"comick writers brought no characters higher

" than servants, to make sport upon the theatre; " but we are diverted upon the theatre of Moliere " by marquises and people of quality. Others " have exhibited in comedy no species of life above " that of a citizen; but Moliere shews us all " Paris, and the court. He is the only man " amongst us, who has laid open those features of " nature by which he is exactly marked, and may " be accurately known. The beauties of his pic- " tures are so natural, that they are felt by persons " of the least discernment, and his power of plea- " santry received half its force from his power of " copying. His Misanthrope is, in my opinion, " the most complete, and likewise the most singu- " lar character that has ever appeared upon the " stage: but the disposition of his comedies is al- " ways defective some way or another. This is all " which we can observe in general upon comedy."

Such are the thoughts of one of the most refined judges of works of genius, from which, though they are not all oraculous, some advantages may be drawn, as they always make some approaches to truth.

Madame Dacier *, having her mind full of the merit of Aristophanes, expresses herself in this manner: " No man had ever more discernment " than him, in finding out the ridiculous, nor a " more ingenious manner of shewing it to others. " His remarks are natural and easy, and, what " very rarely can be found, with great copiousness " he has great delicacy. To say all at once, the " Attick wit, of which the ancients made such " boast, appears more in Aristophanes than in

* Preface to Plautus. Paris, 1684.

"any other that I know of in antiquity. But "what is most of all to be admired in him is, that "he is always so much master of the subject be- "fore him, that, without doing any violence to "himself, he finds a way to introduce naturally "things which at first appeared most distant from "his purpose; and even the most quick and un- "expected of his desultory sallies appear the ne- "cessary consequence of the foregoing incidents. "This is that art which sets the dialogues of Plato "above imitation, which we must consider as so "many dramatick pieces, which are equally en- "tertaining by the action and by the dialogue. "The style of Aristophanes is no less pleasing "than his fancy; for, besides its clearness, its "vigour, and its sweetness, there is in it a certain "harmony so delightful to the ear, that there is "no pleasure equal to that of reading it. When "he applies himself to vulgar mediocrity of style, "he descends without meanness; when he at- "tempts the sublime, he is elevated without ob- "scurity; and no man has ever had the art of "blending all the different kinds of writing so "equally together. After having studied all that "is left us of Grecian learning, if we have not "read Aristophanes, we cannot yet know all the "charms and beauties of that language."

Plutarch's sentiment upon Aristophanes and Menander.

IX. This is a pompous elogium: but let us suspend our opinion, and hear that of Plutarch, who, being an ancient, well deserves our attention, at least after we have heard the moderns before him. This is then the sum of his judgment concerning Aristophanes and Me-

nander. To Menander he gives the preference, without allowing much competition. He objects to Aristophanes, that he carries all his thoughts beyond nature, that he writes rather to the crowd than to men of character; that he affects a style obscure and licentious; tragical, pompous, and mean, sometimes serious, and sometimes ludicrous, even to puerility; that he makes none of his personages speak according to any distinct character, so that in his scenes the son cannot be known from the father, the citizen from the boor, the hero from the shopkeeper, or the divine from the serving-man. Whereas the diction of Menander, which is always uniform and pure, is very justly adapted to different characters, rising when it is necessary to vigorous and sprightly comedy, yet without transgressing the proper limits, or losing sight of nature, in which Menander, says Plutarch, has attained a perfection to which no other writer has arrived. For, what man, besides himself, has ever found the art of making a diction equally suitable to women and children, to old and young, to divinities and heroes? Now Menander has found this happy secret, in the equality and flexibility of his diction, which, though always the same, is nevertheless different upon different occasions; like a current of clear water (to keep closely to the thoughts of Plutarch), which running through banks differently turned, complies with all their turns backward and forward, without changing any thing of its nature or its purity. Plutarch mentions it as a part of the merit of Menander, that he began very young, and was stopped only by old age, at a time when he would

have produced the greatest wonders, if death had not prevented him. This, joined to a reflection, which he makes as he returns to Aristophanes, shews that Aristophanes continued a long time to display his powers: for his poetry, says Plutarch, is a strumpet that affects sometimes the airs of a prude, but whose impudence cannot be forgiven by the people, and whose affected modesty is despised by men of decency. Menander, on the contrary, always shews himself a man agreeable and witty, a companion desirable upon the stage, at table, and in gay assemblies; an extract of all the treasures of Greece, who deserves always to be read, and always to please. His irresistible power of persuasion, and the reputation which he has had, of being the best master of language of Greece, sufficiently shews the delightfulness of his style. Upon this article of Menander, Plutarch does not know how to make an end: he says, that he is the delight of philosophers fatigued with study; that they use his works as a meadow enamelled with flowers, where a purer air gratifies the sense; that notwithstanding the powers of the other comick poets of Athens, Menander has always been considered as possessing a salt peculiar to himself, drawn from the same waters that gave birth to Venus. That, on the contrary, the salt of Aristophanes is bitter, keen, coarse, and corrosive; that one cannot tell whether his dexterity, which has been so much boasted, consists not more in the characters than in the expression, for he is charged with playing often upon words, with affecting antithetical allusions; that he has spoiled the copies which he endeavoured to take after na-

ture; that artifice in his plays is wickedness, and simplicity, brutishness; that his jocularity ought to raise hisses rather than laughter; that his amours have more impudence than gaiety; and that he has not so much written for men of understanding, as for minds blackened with envy and corrupted with debauchery.

The justification of Aristophanes.

X. After such a character there seems no need of going further; and one would think that it would be better to bury for ever the memory of so hateful a writer, that makes us so poor a recompense for the loss of Menander, who cannot be recalled. But, without shewing any mercy to the indecent or malicious sallies of Aristophanes, any more than to Plautus his imitator, or at least the inheritor of his genius, may it not be allowed us to do, with respect to him, what, if I mistake not, Lucretius * did to Ennius, from whose muddy verses he gathered jewels? *Enni de stercore gemmas.*

Besides, we must not believe that Plutarch, who lived more than four ages after Menander, and more than five after Aristophanes, has passed so exact a judgment upon both, but that it may be fit to re-examine it. Plato, the contemporary of Aristophanes, thought very differently at least of his genius; for, in his piece called *The Entertainment*, he gives that poet a distinguished place, and makes him speak, according to his character, with Socrates himself; from which, by the way, it is apparent, that this dialogue of Plato was com-

* Brumoy has mistaken Lucretius for Virgil.

posed before the time that Aristophanes wrote his *Clouds* against Socrates. Plato is lskewise said to have sent a copy of *Aristophanes* to Dionysius the tyrant, with advice to read it diligently, if he would attain a complete judgment of the state of the Athenian republick.

Many other scholars have thought, that they might depart somewhat from the opinion of Plutarch. Frischlinus, for example, one of the commentators upon Aristophanes, though he justly allows his taste to be less pure than that of Menander, has yet undertaken his defence against the outrageous censure of the ancient critick. In the first place, he condemns without mercy his ribaldry and obscenity. But this part, so worthy of contempt, and written only for the lower people, according to the remark of Boivin, bad as it is, after all is not the chief part which is left of Aristophanes. I will not say with Frischlinus, that Plutarch seems in this to contradict himself, and in reality commends the poet, when he accuses him of having adapted his language to the stage; by the stage, in this place, he meant the theatre of *Farces*, on which low mirth and buffoonery was exhibited. This plea of Frischlinus is a mere cavil; and though the poet had obtained his end, which was to divert a corrupted populace, he would not have been less a bad man, nor less a despicable poet, notwithstanding the excuse of his defender. To be able in the highest degree to divert fools and libertines, will not make a poet: it is not, therefore, by this defence that we must justify the character of Aristophanes. The depraved taste of the crowd, who once drove away

Cratinus and his company, because the scenes had not low buffoonery enough for their taste, will not justify Aristophanes, since Menander found a way of changing the taste by giving a sort of comedy, not indeed so modest as Plutarch represents it, but less licentious than before. Nor is Aristophanes better justified by the reason which he himself offers, when he says, that he exhibited debauchery upon the stage, not to corrupt the morals, but to mend them. The sight of gross faults is rather a poison than a remedy.

The apologist has forgot one reason, which appears to me to be essential to a just account. As far as we can judge by appearance, Plutarch had in his hands all the plays of Aristophanes, which were at least fifty in number. In these he saw more licentiousness than has come to our hands, though in the eleven that are still remaining, there is much more than could be wished.

Plutarch censures him in the second place for playing upon words; and against this charge Frischlinus defends him with less skill. It is impossible to exemplify this in French. But after all, this part is so little, that it deserved not so severe a reprehension, especially since amongst those sayings, there are some so mischievously malignant, that they became proverbial, at least by the sting of their malice, if not by the delicacy of their wit. One example will be sufficient: speaking of the tax-gatherers, or the excisemen of Athens, he crushes them at once by observing, *non quod essent ταμιαὶ sed λαμιαὶ.* The word *lamiæ* signified *walking spirits*, which, according to the vulgar notion, devoured men; this makes the spirit of the sar-

casm against the tax-gatherers. This cannot be rendered in our language; but if any thing as good had been said in France on the like occasion, it would have lasted too long, and, like many other sayings amongst us, been too well received. The best is, that Plutarch himself confesses that it was extremely applauded.

The third charge is, a mixture of tragick and comick style. This accusation is certainly true; Aristophanes often gets into the buskin: but we must examine upon what occa ion. He does not take upon him the character of a tragick writer; but, having remarked that his trick of parody was always well received by a people who liked to laugh at that for which they had been just weeping, he is eternally using the same craft; and there is scarce any tragedy or striking passage known by memory by the Athenians, which he does not turn into merriment, by throwing over it a dress of ridicule or burlesque, which is done sometimes by changing or transposing the words, and sometimes by an unexpected application of the whole sentence. These are the shreds of tragedy, in which he arrays the comick muse, to make her still more comick. Cratinus had before done the same thing; and we know that he made a comedy called Ulysses, to burlesque Homer and his Odyssey; which shews, that the wits and poets are, with respect to one another, much the same at all times, and that it was at Athens as here. I will prove this system by facts, particularly with respect to the merriment of Aristophanes upon our three celebrated tragedians. This being the case, the mingled style of Aristophanes will, perhaps, not deserve so much

censure as Plutarch has vented. We have no need of the Travesty of Virgil, nor the parodies of our own time, nor of the Lutrin of Boileau, to shew us that this medley may have its merit upon particular occasions.

The same may be said in general of his obscurity, his meannesses, and his high flights, and of all the seeming inequality of style, which puts Plutarch in a rage. These censures can never be just upon a poet, whose style has always been allowed to be perfectly Attick, and of an Atticism which made them extremely delightful to the lovers of the Athenian taste. Plutarch, perhaps, rather means to blame the chorusses, of which the language is sometimes elevated, sometimes burlesque, always very poetical, and therefore in appearance not suitable to comedy. But the chorus, which had been borrowed from tragedy, was then all the fashion, particularly for pieces of satire, and Aristophanes admitted them like the other poets of the old, and perhaps of the middle comedy; whereas Menander suppressed them, not so much in compliance with his own judgment, as in obedience to the publick edicts. It is not, therefore, this mixture of tragick and comick that will place Aristophanes below Menander.

The fifth charge is, that he kept no distinction of character; that, for example, he makes women speak like orators, and orators like slaves: but it appears by the characters which he ridicules, that this objection falls of itself. It is sufficient to say, that a poet who painted, not imaginary characters, but real persons, men well known, citizens whom he called by their names, and shewed in dresses

like their own, and masks resembling their faces, whom he branded in the sight of a whole city, extremely haughty and full of derision; it is sufficient to say, that such a poet could never be supposed to miss his characters. The applause, which his licentiousness produced, is too good a justification; besides, if he had not succeeded, he exposed himself to the fate of Eupolis, who, in a comedy called the *Drowned Man*, having imprudently pulled to pieces particular persons, more powerful than himself, was laid hold of, and drowned more effectually than those he had drowned upon the open stage.

The condemnation of the poignancy of Aristophanes, as having too much acrimony, is better founded. Such was the turn of a species of comedy, in which all licentiousness was allowed: in a nation which made every thing a subject of laughter, in its jealousy of immoderate liberty, and its enmity to all appearance of rule and superiority; for the genius of independency naturally produces a kind of satire more keen than delicate, as may be easily observed in most of the inhabitants of islands. If we do not say with Longinus, that a popular government kindles eloquence, and that a lawful monarchy stifles it; at least it is easy to discover by the event, that eloquence in different governments takes a different appearance. In republicks it is more sprightly and violent, and in monarchies more insinuating and soft. The same thing may be said of ridicule: it follows the cast of genius, as genius follows that of government. Thus the republican raillery, particularly of the age which we are now considering, must have been

rougher than that of the age which followed it, for the same reason, that Horace is more delicate, and Lucilius more pointed. A dish of satire was always a delicious treat to human malignity; but that dish was differently seasoned, as the manners were polished more or less. By polished manners, I mean that good-breeding, that art of reserve and self-restraint, which is the consequence of dependence. If one was to determine the preference due to one of those kinds of pleasantry, of which both have their value, there would not need a moment's hesitation, every voice would join in favour of the softer, yet without contempt of that which is rough. Menander, will, therefore be preferred, but Aristophanes will not be despised, especially since he was the first who quitted that wild practice of satirizing at liberty right or wrong, and by a comedy of another cast made way for the manner of Menander, more agreeable yet, and less dangerous. There is yet another distinction to be made between the acrimony of the one, and the softness of the other; the works of the one are acrimonious, and of the other soft, because the one exhibited personal, and the other general characters; which leaves us still at liberty to examine, if these different designs might not be executed with equal delicacy.

We shall know this by a view of the particulars; in this place we say only that the reigning taste, or the love of striking likenesses, might justify Aristophanes for having turned, as Plutarch says, art into malignity, simplicity into brutality, merriment into farce, and amour into impudence; if in any age a poet could be excused for painting publick folly and vice in their true colours.

There is a motive of interest at the bottom which disposed Elian, Plutarch, and many others, to condemn this poet without appeal. Socrates, who is said to have been destroyed by a poetical attack, at the instigation of two wretches *, has too many friends among good men, to have pardon granted to so horrid a crime. This has filled them with an implacable hatred against Aristophanes, which is mingled with the spirit of philosophy, a spirit, wherever it comes, more dangerous than any other. A common enemy will confess some good qualities in his adversary; but a philosopher, made partial by philosophy, is never at rest till he has totally destroyed him who has hurt the most tender part of his heart; that is, has disturbed him in his adherence to some character, which, like that of Socrates, takes possession of the mind. The mind is the freest part of man, and the most tender of its liberties: possessions, life, and reputation, may be in another's power, but opinion is always independent. If any man can obtain that gentle influence, by which he ingratiates himself with the understanding, and makes a sect in a commonwealth, his followers will sacrifice themselves for him, and nobody will be pardoned that dares to attack him justly or unjustly, because that truth, real or imaginary, which he maintained, is now become an idol. Time will do nothing for the extinction of this hatred; it will be propagated from age to age; and there is no hope that Aristophanes

* It is not certain, that Aristophanes did procure the death of Socrates: but, however, he is is certainly criminal for having, in the *Clouds*, accused him publickly of impiety.

will ever be treated with tenderness by the disciples of Plato, who made Socrates his hero. Every body else may, perhaps, confess, that Aristophanes, though in one instance a bad man, may nevertheless be a good poet; but distinctions, like these, will not be admitted by prejudice and passion, and one or other dictates all characters, whether good or bad.

As I add my own reasons, such as they are, for or against Aristophanes, to those of Frischlinus his defender, I must not omit one thing which he has forgot, and which, perhaps, without taking in the rest, put Plutarch out of humour, which is that perpetual farce which goes through all the comedies of Aristophanes, like the character of *Harlequin* on the Italian theatre. What kind of personages are clouds, frogs, wasps, and birds? Plutarch, used to a comick stage of a very different appearance, must have thought them strange things; and yet stranger must they appear to us who have a newer kind of comedy, with which the Greeks were unacquainted. This is what our poet may be charged with, and what may be proved beyond refutation. This charge comprises all the rest, and against this I shall not pretend to justify him. It would be of no use to say, that Aristophanes wrote for an age that required shews which filled the eye, and grotesque paintings in satirical performances; that the crowds of spectators, which sometimes neglected Cratinus to throng Aristophanes, obliged him more and more to comply with the ruling taste, lest he should lose the publick favour by pictures more delicate and less striking; that in a state, where it was considered as policy to lay open every thing

that had the appearance of ambition, singularity, or knavery, comedy was become a haranguer, a reformer, and a publick counseller, from whom the people learned to take care of their most valuable interests; and that this comedy, in the attempt to lead and to please the people, claimed a right to the strongest touches of eloquence, and had likewise the power of personal painting peculiar to herself. All these reasons, and many others, would disappear immediately, and my mouth would be stopped with a single word, with which every body would agree: my antagonist would tell me that such an age was to be pitied, and passing on from age to age, till he came to our own, he would conclude flatly, that we are the only possessors of common sense; a determination with which the French are too much reproached, and which overthrows all the prejudice in favour of antiquity. At the sight of so many happy touches, which one cannot help admiring in Aristophanes, a man might, perhaps, be inclined to lament that such a genius was thrown into an age of fools: but what age has been without them? And have not we ourselves reason to fear, lest posterity should judge of Moliere and his age, as we judge of Aristophanes? Menander altered the taste, and was applauded in Athens; but it was after Athens was changed. Terence imitated him at Rome, and obtained the preference over Plautus, though Cæsar called him but a demi-Menander, because he appears to want that spirit and vivacity which he calls the *vis comica*. We are now weary of the manner of Menander and Terence, and leave them for Moliere, who appears like a new star in a new course. Who can answer, that in such

an interval of time as has past between these four writers there will not arise another author, or another taste, that may bring Moliere, in his turn, into neglect? Without going further, our neighbours, the English, think he wants force and fire. Whether they are right, or no, is another question; all that I mean to advance is, that we are to fix it as a conclusion, that comick authors must grow obsolete with the modes of life, if we admit any one age, or any one climate, for the sovereign rule of taste. But let us talk with more exactness, and endeavour, by an exact analysis to find out what there is in comedy, whether of Aristophanes and Plautus, of Menander and Terence, of Moliere and his rivals, which is never obsolete, and must please all ages, and all nations.

Remarkable difference between the state of comedy and other works of genius, with regard to their duration.

XI. I now speak particularly of comedy; for we must observe that between that and other works of literature, especially tragedy, there is an essential difference, which the enemies of antiquity will not understand, and which I shall endeavour palpably to shew.

All works shew the age in which they are produced; they carry its stamp upon them; the manners of the times are impressed by indelible marks. If it be allowed, that the best of past times were rude in comparison with ours, the cause of the ancients is decided against them; and the want of politeness, with which their works are charged in our days, must be generally confessed. History alone seems to claim exemption from this accusation. Nobody will dare to say of Herodotus or

Thucydides, of Livius or Tacitus, that which has been said without scruple of Homer and the ancient poets. The reason is, that history takes the nearest way to its purpose, and gives the characters and practices of nations, be they what they will; it has no dependence upon its subject, and offers nothing to examination, but the art of the narrative. An history of China well written, would please a Frenchman as well as one of France. It is otherwise with mere works of genius; they depend upon their subjects, and consequently upon the characters and the practices of the times in which they were written; this at least is the light in which they are beheld. This rule of judgment is not equitable; for, as I have said over and over, all the orators and the poets are painters, and merely painters. They exhibit nature as it is before them, influenced by the accidents of education, which, without changing it entirely, yet give it, in different ages and climates, a different appearance; but we make their success depend in a great degree upon their subject, that is, upon circumstances which we measure by the circumstances of our own days. According to this prejudice, oratory depends more upon its subject than history, and poetry yet more than oratory. Our times, therefore, shew more regard to Herodotus and Suetonius, than to Demosthenes and Cicero, and more to all these than to Homer or Virgil. Of this prejudice, there are regular gradations; and to come back to the point which we have left, we shew, for the same imperceptible reason, less regard to tragick poets than to others. The reason is, that the subjects of their paintings are more examined than the art.

Thus comparing the *Achilles* and *Hippolytus* of Euripides, with those of Racine, we drive them off the stage, without considering that Racine's heroes will be driven off, in a future age, if the same rule of judgment be followed, and one time be measured by another.

Yet tragedy having the passions for its object, is not wholly exposed to the caprice of our taste, which would make our own manners the rule of human kind; for the passions of Grecian heroes are often dressed in external modes of appearance that disgust us, yet they break through the veil when they are strongly marked, as we cannot deny them to be in Eschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. The essence then gets the better of the circumstance. The passions of Greece and France do not so much differ by the particular characters of particular ages, as they agree by the participation of that which belongs to the same passion in all ages. Our three tragick poets will, therefore, get clear by suffering only a little ridicule, which falls directly upon their times; but these times and themselves will be well recompensed by the admiration which their art will irresistibly enforce.

Comedy is in a more lamentable situation; for, not only its object is the ridiculous, which, though in reality always the same, is so dependant on custom as to change its appearance with time, and with place; but the art of a comick writer is, to lay hold of that species of the ridiculous which will catch the spectators of the present hour, without regard to futurity. But, though comedy has attained its end, and diverted the pit, for which it was written; if it goes down to posterity, it is in

a new world, where it is no longer known; it becomes there quite a foreigner, because there are no longer the same originals, nor the same species of the ridiculous, nor the same spectators, but a set of merciless readers, who complain that they are tired with it, though it once filled Athens, Rome, or Paris, with merriment. This position is general, and comprises all poets and all ages. To say all at once, comedy is the slave of its subject, and of the reigning taste; tragedy is not subject to the same degree of slavery, because the ends of the two species of poetry are different. For this reason, if we suppose that in all ages there are criticks who measure every thing by the same rule, it will follow, that if the comedy of Aristophanes be become obsolete, that of Menander likewise, after having delighted Athens, and revived again at Rome, at last suffered by the force of time. The Muse of Moliere has almost made both of them forgotten, and would still be walking the stage, if the desire of novelty did not in time make us weary of that which we have too frequently admired.

Those who have endeavoured to render their judgment independant upon manners and customs, and of such men there have been always some, have not judged so severely either of times, or of writers; they have discovered that a certain resemblance runs through all polished ages, which are alike in essential things, and differ only in external manners, which, if we except religion, are things of indifference; that wherever there is genius, politeness, liberty, or plenty, there prevails an exact and delicate taste, which, however hard to be expressed, is felt by those that were born to feel it; that

Athens, the inventress of all the arts, the mother first of the Roman and then of general taste, did not consist of stupid savages; that the Athenian and Augustan ages having always been considered as times that enjoyed a particular privilege of excellence, though we may distinguish the good authors from the bad, as in our own days, yet we ought to suspend the vehemence of criticism, and proceed with caution and timidity before we pass sentence upon times and writers, whose good taste has been universally applauded. This obvious consideration has disposed them to pause; they have endeavoured to discover the original of taste, and have found that there is not only a stable and immutable beauty, as there is a common understanding in all times and places, which is never obsolete; but there is another kind of beauty, such as we are now treating, which depends upon times and places, and is therefore changeable. Such is the imperfection of every thing below, that one mode of beauty is never found without a mixture of the other, and from these two blended together results what is called the taste of an age. I am now speaking of an age sprightly and polite, an age which leaves works for a long time behind it, an age which is imitated or criticised when revolutions have thrown it out of sight.

Upon this incontestable principle, which supposes a beauty universal and absolute, and a beauty likewise relative and particular, which are mingled through one work in very different proportions, it is easy to give an account of the contrary judgements passed on Aristophanes. If we consider him only with respect to the beauties, which, though

they do not please us, delighted the Athenians, we shall condemn him at once, though even this sort of beauty may sometimes have its original in universal beauty carried to extravagance. Instead of commending him for being able to give merriment to the most refined nation of those days, we shall proceed to place that people, with all their atticism, in the rank of savages whom we take upon us to degrade because they have no other qualifications but innocence and plain understanding. But have not we likewise amidst our more polished manners, beauties merely fashionable, which make part of our writings as of the writings of former times; beauties of which our self-love now makes us fond, but which, perhaps, will disgust our grandsons? Let us be more equitable, let us leave this relative beauty to its real value more or less in every age: or, if we must pass judgment upon it, let us say that these touches in Aristophanes, Menander, and Moliere, were well struck off in their own time; but, that comparing them with true beauty, that part of Aristophanes was a colouring too strong, that of Menander was too weak, and that of Moliere was a peculiar varnish formed of one and the other, which, without being an imitation, is itself inimitable, yet depending upon time, which will efface it by degrees, as our notions, which are every day changing, shall receive a sensible alteration. Much of this has already happened since the time of Moliere, who, if he was now to come again, must take a new road.

With respect to unalterable beauties, of whic comedy admits much fewer than tragedy, when they are the subject of our consideration, we must

not too easily set Aristophanes and Plautus below Menander and Terence. We may properly hesitate, with Boileau, whether we shall prefer the French comedy to the Greek and Latin. Let us only give, like him, the great rule for pleasing in all ages, and the key by which all the difficulties in passing judgment may be opened. This rule and this key are nothing else but the ultimate design of the comedy.

Etudiez la cour, & connoissez la ville:
L'une & l'autre est toujours en modéles fertile.
C'est par-là que Moliere illustrant ses écrits
Peut-être de son art eût remporté le prix,
Si moins ami du peuple en ses doctes peintures
Il n'eût point fait souvent grimacer ses figures,
Quitté pour le bouffon l'agréable & le fin,
Et sans honte à Terence allié Tabarin *.

In truth, Aristophanes and Plautus united buffoonery and delicacy in a greater degree than Moliere; and for this they may be blamed. That which then pleased at Athens, and at Rome, was a transitory beauty, which had not sufficient foundation in truth, and therefore the taste changed. But, if we condemn those ages for this, what age shall we spare? Let us refer every thing to permanent and universal taste, and we shall find in Aristophanes at least as much to commend as censure.

Tragedy more uniform than comedy.

XII. But before we go on to his works, it may be allowed to make some reflections upon tragedy and comedy. Tragedy, though different according to the difference of times and writers, is uniform in its

* Boileau Art. Poet. chant. 3.

nature, being founded upon the passions which never change. With comedy it is otherwise. Whatever difference there is between Eschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; between Corneille and Racine; between the French and the Greeks, it will not be found sufficient to constitute more than one species of tragedy.

The works of those great masters are, in some respects, like the sea-nymphs, of whom Ovid says, "That their faces were not the same, yet so much "alike that they might be known to be sisters."

Facies non omnibus una,
Nec diversa tamen, qualem decet esse sororum.

The reason is, that the same passions give action and animation to them all. With respect to the comedies of Aristophanes and Plautus, Menander and Terence, Moliere and his imitators, if we compare them one with another, we shall find something of a family likeness, but much less strongly marked, on account of the different appearance which ridicule and pleasantry take from the different manners of every age. They will not pass for sisters, but for very distant relations. The muse of Aristophanes and Plautus, to speak of her with justice, is a bacchanal at least, whose malignant tongue is dipped in gall, or in poison dangerous as that of the aspic or viper; but whose bursts of malice, and sallies of wit, often give a blow where it is not expected. The Muse of Terence, and consequently of Menander, is an artless and unpainted beauty, of easy gaiety, whose features are rather delicate than striking, rather soft than

strong, rather plain and modest than great and haughty, but always perfectly natural.

Ce n'est pas un portrait, une image semblable:
C'est un fils, un amant, un pere véritable.

The Muse of Moliere is not always plainly dressed, but takes airs of quality, and rises above her original condition, so as to attire herself gracefully in magnificent apparel. In her manners she mingles elegance with foolery, force with delicacy, and grandeur, or even haughtiness, with plainness and modesty. If sometimes, to please the people, she gives a loose to farce, it is only the gay folly of a moment, from which she immediately returns, and which lasts no longer than a slight intoxication. The first might be painted encircled with little satyrs, some grossly foolish, the others delicate, but all extremely licentious and malignant; monkeys always ready to laugh in your face, and to point out to indiscriminate ridicule, the good and the bad. The second may be shewn encircled with geniuses full of softness and of candour, taught to please by nature alone, and whose honeyed dialect is so much the more insinuating, as there is no temptation to distrust it. The last must be accompanied with the delicate laughter of the court, and that of the city somewhat more coarse, and neither the one nor the other can be separated from her. The Muse of Aristophanes and of Plautus can never be denied the honour of sprightliness, animation and invention nor that of Menander and Terence, the praise of nature and of delicacy; to that of Moliere must be allowed the happy secret of uniting all the piquancy of the former, with a peculiar art which they did not know. Of these three sorts of merit, let

us shew to each the justice that is due, let us in each separate the pure and the true from the false gold without approving or condemning either the one or the other in the gross. If we must pronounce in general upon the taste of their writings, we must indisputably allow that Menander, Terence, and Moliere, will give most pleasure to a decent audience, and consequently that they approach nearer to the true beauty, and have less mixture of beauties purely relative, than Plautus and Aristophanes.

If we distinguish comedy by its subjects, we shall find three sorts among the Greeks, and as many among the Latins, all differently dressed: if we distinguish it by ages and authors, we shall again find three sorts; and we shall find three sorts a third time if we regard more closely the subject. As the ultimate and general rules of all these sorts of comedy are the same, it will, perhaps, be agreeable to our purpose to sketch them out before we give a full display of the last class. I can do nothing better on this occasion than transcribe the twenty-fifth reflection of Rapin upon poetry in particular.

XIII. "Comedy, says he *, is a representation of common life: its end is to shew the faults of particular characters on the stage, to correct the disorder of the people by the fear of ridicule. Thus ridicule is the essential part of a comedy. Ridicule may be in words, or in things; it may be decent, or grotesque. To find what is ri- General rules of comedy.

* *Reflections sur la Poët.* p. 154. *Paris*, 1684.

" diculous in every thing, is the gift merely of na-
" ture; for all the actions of life have their bright
" and their dark sides; something serious, and
" something merry. But Aristotle, who has given
" rules for drawing tears, has given none for rais-
" ing laughter; for this is merely the work of na-
" ture, and must proceed from genius, with very
" little help from art or matter. The Spaniards
" have a turn to find the ridicule in things much
" more than we: and the Italians, who are natural
" comedians, have a better turn for expressing it;
" their language is more proper for it than ours, by
" an air of drollery which it can put on, and of
" which ours may become capable when it shall be
" brought nearer to perfection. In short, that
" agreeable turn, that gaiety which yet maintains
" the delicacy of its character without falling into
" dullness or into buffoonery, that elegant raillery
" which is the flower of fine wit, is the qualifica-
" tion which comedy requires. We must, how-
" ever, remember that the true artificial ridicule,
" which is required on the theatre, must be only
" a transcript of the ridicule which nature affords.
" Comedy is naturally written, when, being on the
" theatre, a man can fancy himself in a private fa-
" mily, or a particular part of the town, and
" meets with nothing but what he really meets
" with in the world; for it is no real comedy in
" which a man does not see his own picture, and
" find his own manners and those of the people
" among whom he lives. Menander succeeded
" only by this art among the Greeks: and the Ro-
" mans, when they sat at Terence's comedies, ima-
" gined themselves in a private party; for they
„ found nothing there which they had not been

"used to find in common company. The great "art of comedy is to adhere to nature without de- "viation; to have general sentiments and expres- "sions which all the world can understand: for "the writer must keep it always in his mind, that "the coarsest touches after nature will please "more than the most delicate with which nature "is inconsistent. However, low and mean words "should never be allowed upon the stage, if they "are not supported with some kind of wit. Proverbs "and vulgar smartnesses can never be suffered, un- "less they have something in them of nature and "pleasantry. This is the universal principle of "comedy; whatever is represented in this manner "must please, and nothing can ever please without "it. It is by application to the study of nature "alone that we arrive at probability, which is the "only infallible guide to theatrical success: with- "out this probability every thing is defective, and "that which has it, is beautiful: he that follows "this, can never go wrong; and the most common "faults of comedy proceed from the neglect of "propriety, and the precipitation of incidents. "Care must likewise be taken that the hints, made "use of to introduce the incidents, are not too "strong, that the spectator may enjoy the plea- "sure of finding out their meaning: but commonly "the weak place in our comedy is the untying of "the plot, in which we almost always fail, on ac- "count of the difficulty which there is in disen- "tangling of what has been perplexed. To per- "plex an intrigue is easy, the imagination does it "by itself; but it must be disentangled merely by "the judgment, and is, therefore, seldom done hap-

" pily: and he that reflects a very little, will find " that most comedies are faulty by an unnatural " catastrophe. It remains to be examined whether " comedy will allow pictures larger than the life, " that this strength of the strokes may make a " deeper impression upon the mind of the specta- " tors; that is, if a poet may make a covetous man " more covetous, and a peevish man more imper- " tinent and more troublesome than he really is. " To which I answer, that this was the practice " of Plautus, whose aim was to please the people; " but that Terence, who wrote for gentlemen, " confined himself within the compass of nature, " and represented vice without addition or aggra- " vation. However, these extravagant characters, " such as the *Citizen turned Gentleman*, and the " *Hypochondriac Patient* of Moliere, have lately suc- " ceeded at court, where delicacy is carried so far; " but every thing, even to provincial interludes, " is well received if it has but merriment, for we " had rather laugh than admire. These are the " most important rules of comedy."

Three sorts of comedy.

XIV. These rules, indeed, are common to the three kinds which I have in my mind; but it is necessary to distinguish each from the rest, which may be done by diversity of matter, which always makes some diversity of management. The old and middle comedy simply represented real adventures: in the same way some passages of history and of fable might form a class of comedies, which should resemble it without having its faults; such is the Amphitryon. How many moral tales, how many adventures ancient and modern, how many little fables of Æsop, of

Phædrus, of Fontaine, or some other ancient poet, would make pretty exhibitions, if they were all made use of as materials by skilful hands? And have we not seen some like *Timon the Man Hater*, that have been successful in this way? This sort chiefly regards the Italians. The ancient exhibition called a satyre, because the satyrs played their part in it, of which we have no other instance than the Cyclops of Euripides, has, without doubt, given occasion to the pastoral comedies, for which we are chiefly indebted to Italy, and which are there more cultivated than in France. It is, however, a kind of exhibition that would have its charms, if it was touched with elegance and without meanness; it is the pastoral put into action. To conclude, the new comedy, invented by Menander, has produced the comedy properly so called in our times. This is that which has for its subject general pictures of common life, and feigned names and adventures, whether of the court or of the city. This third kind is incontestably the most noble, and has received the strongest sanction from custom. It is likewise the most difficult to perform, because it is merely the work of invention, in which the poet has no help from real passages, or persons, which the tragick poet always makes use of. Who knows but by deep thinking, another kind of comedy may be invented wholly different from the three which I have mentioned; such is the fruitfulness of comedy: but its course is already too wide for the discovery of new fields to be wished, and on ground where we are already so apt to stumble, nothing is so dangerous as novelty imperfectly understood. This is the rock on

which men have often split in every kind of pursuit; to go no further, in that of grammar and language: it is better to endeavour after novelty in the manner of expressing common things, than to hunt for ideas out of the way, in which many a man loses himself. The ill success of that odd composition *Tragick Comedy*, a monster wholly unknown to antiquity, sufficiently shews the danger of novelty in attempts like these.

Whether tragedy or comedy be the harder to write.

XV. To finish the parallel of the two dramas, a question may be revived equally common and important, which has been oftener proposed than well decided: it is, whether comedy or tragedy be most easy or difficult to be well executed. I shall not have the temerity to determine positively a question which so many great geniuses have been afraid to decide: but if it be allowed to every literary man to give his reason for and against a mere work of genius, considered without respect to its good or bad tendency, I shall in a few words give my opinion, drawn from the nature of the two works, and the qualifications they demand. Horace* proposes a question nearly of the same kind: "It has been enquired, whether "a good poem be the work of art or nature? for "my part, I do not see much to be done by art "without genius, nor by genius without knowledge. The one is necessary to the other, and "the success depends upon their co-operation." If we should endeavour to accommodate matters in imitation of this decision of Horace, it were easy

* Poet. v. 407.

to say at once, that supposing two geniuses equal, one tragick and the other comick, supposing the art likewise equal in each, one would be as easy or difficult as the other; but this, though satisfactory in the simple question put by Horace, will not be sufficient here. Nobody can doubt but genius and industry contribute their part to every thing valuable, and particularly to good poetry. But if genius and study were to be weighed one against the other, in order to discover which must contribute most to a good work, the question would become more curious, and, perhaps, very difficult of solution. Indeed, though nature must have a great part of the expence of poetry, yet no poetry lasts long that is not very correct: the balance, therefore, seems to incline in favour of correction. For is it not known that Virgil with less genius than Ovid, is yet valued more by men of exquisite judgment; or, without going so far, Boileau, the Horace of our time, who composed with so much labour, and asked Moliere where he found his rhyme so easily, has said, "If I write four words, I shall "blot out three;" has not Boileau, by his polished lines, retouched and retouched a thousand times, gained the preference above the works of the same Moliere, which are so natural, and produced by so fruitful a genius! Horace was of that opinion, for when he is teaching the writers of his age the art of poetry, he tells them in plain terms, that Rome would excel in writing as in arms, if the poets were not afraid of the labour, patience, and time required to polish their pieces. He thought every poem was bad that had not been brought ten times back to the anvil, and required that a work should

be kept nine years, as a child is nine months in the womb of its mother, to restrain that natural impatience which combine with sloth and self-love to disguise faults; so certain is it that correction is the touch-stone of writing.

The question proposed comes back to the comparison which I have been making between genius and correction, since we are now engaged in enquiring whether there is more or less difficulty in writing tragedy or comedy: for as we must compare nature and study one with another, since they must both concur more or less to make a poet; so if we will compare the labours of two different minds in different kinds of writing, we must, with regard to the authors, compare the force of genius, and with respect to the composition, the difficulties of the task.

The genius of the tragick and comick writer will be easily allowed to be remote from each other. Every performance, be what it will, requires a turn of mind which a man cannot confer upon himself: it is purely the gift of nature, which determines those who have it, to pursue, almost in spite of themselves, the taste which predominates in their minds. Pascal found in his childhood, that he was a mathematician, and Vandyke that he was born a painter. Sometimes this internal direction of the mind does not make such evident discoveries of itself; but it is rare to find Corneilles who have lived long without knowing that they were poets. Corneille having once got some notion of his powers, tried a long time on all sides to know what particular direction he should take. He had first made an attempt in comedy, in an age when it was yet so gross in France that it could give no

pleasure to polite persons. *Melite* was so well received when he dressed her out, that she gave rise to a new species of comedy and comedians. This success, which encouraged Corneille to pursue that sort of comedy of which he was the first inventor, left him no reason to imagine, that he was one day to produce those master-pieces of tragedy, which his muse displayed afterwards with so much splendour; and yet less did he imagine, that his comick pieces, which, for want of any that were preferable, were then very much in fashion, would be eclipsed by another genius * formed upon the Greeks and Romans, and who would add to their excellencies improvements of his own, and that this modish comedy, to which Corneille, as to his idol, dedicated his labours, would quickly be forgot. He wrote first *Medea*, and afterwards the *Cid*, and, by that prodigious flight of his genius, he discovered, though late, that nature had formed him to run in no other course but that of Sophocles. Happy genius! that, without rule or imitation, could at once take so high a flight; having once, as I may say, made himself an eagle, he never afterwards quitted the path, which he had worked out for himself, over the heads of the writers of his time: yet he retained some traces of the false taste which infected the whole nation; but even in this, he deserves our admiration, since in time he changed it completely by the reflections he made, and those he occasioned. In short, Corneille was born for tragedy, as Moliere for comedy. Moliere, indeed, knew his own genius sooner, and was not less happy

* Moliere.

in procuring applause, though it often happened to him as to Corneille,

L'Ignorance & l'Erreur à ses naissantes piéces.
En Habit de Marquis, en robes de Comtesses,
Vinssent pour diffamer son chef-d'œuvre nouveau,
Et secoüer la tête à l'endroit le plus beau

But, without taking any farther notice of the time at which either came to the knowledge of his own genius, let us suppose that the powers of tragedy and comedy were as equally shared between Moliere and Corneille, as they are different in their own nature, and then nothing more will remain than to compare the several difficulties of each composition, and to rate those difficulties together which are common to both.

It appears, first, that the tragick poet has in his subject an advantage over the comick, for he takes it from history; and his rival, at least in the more elevated and splendid comedy, is obliged to form it by his own invention. Now, it is not so easy as it might seem to find comick subjects capable of a new and pleasing form; but history is a source, if not inexhaustible, yet certainly so copious as never to leave the genius a-ground. It is true, that invention seems to have a wider field than history: real facts are limited in their number, but the facts which may be feigned have no end; but though, in this respect, invention may be allowed to have the advantage, is the difficulty of inventing to be accounted as nothing? To make a tragedy is to get materials together, and to make use of them like a skilful architect; but to make a comedy, is to build like Æsop in the air. It is

in vain to boast that the compass of invention is as wide as the extent of desire: every thing is limited, and the mind of man like every thing else. Besides, invention must be in conformity to nature; but distinct and remarkable characters are very rare in nature herself. Moliere has got hold on the principal touches of ridicule. If any man should bring characters less strong, he will be in danger of dulness. Where comedy is to be kept up by subordinate personages, it is in great danger. All the force of a picture must arise from the principal persons, and not from the multitude clustered up together. In the same manner, a comedy, to be good, must be supported by a single striking character, and not by under-parts.

But, on the contrary, tragick characters are without number, though of them the general outlines are limited; but dissimulation, jealousy, policy, ambition, desire of dominion, and other interests and passions, are various without end, and take a thousand different forms in different situations of history; so that as long as there is tragedy, there may be always novelty. Thus the jealous and dissembling Mithridates, so happily painted by Racine, will not stand in the way of a poet who shall attempt a jealous and dissembling Tiberius. The stormy violence of an Achilles will always leave room for the stormy violence of Alexander.

But the case is very different with avarice, trifling vanity, hypocrisy, and other vices, considered as ridiculous. It would be safer to double and treble all the tragedies of our greatest poets, and use all their subjects over and over, as has been done with *Oedipus* and *Sophonisba*, than to bring

again upon the stage in five acts, a *Miser*, a *Citizen turned Gentleman*, a *Tartuffe*, and other subjects sufficiently known. Not that these popular vices are less capable of diversification, or are less varied by different circumstances, than the vices and passions of heroes; but that if they were to be brought over again in comedies, they would be less distinct, less exact, less forcible, and, consequently, less applauded. Pleasantry and ridicule must be more strongly marked than heroism and pathos, which support themselves by their own force. Besides, though these two things of so different natures could support themselves equally in equal variety, which is very far from being the case; yet comedy, as it now stands, consists not in incidents, but in characters. Now it is by incidents only that characters are diversified, as well upon the stage of comedy, as upon the stage of life. Comedy, as Moliere has left it, resembles the pictures of manners drawn by the celebrated La Bruyere. Would any man after him venture to draw them over again, he would expose himself to the fate of those who have ventured to continue them. For instance, what could we add to his character of the *Absent Man?* Shall we put him in other circumstances? The principal strokes of absence of mind will always be the same; and there are only those striking touches which are fit for a comedy, of which the end is painting after nature, but with strength and sprightliness like the designs of Callot. If comedy were among us what it is in Spain, a kind of romance, consisting of many circmstances and intrigues, perplexed and disentangled, so as to surprise; if it was nearly

the same with that which Corneille practised in his time; if, like that of Terence, it went no farther than to draw the common portraits of simple nature, and shew us fathers, sons, and rivals; notwithstanding the uniformity, which would always prevail as in the plays of Terence, and probably in those of Menander, whom he imitated in his four first pieces, there would always be a resource found either in variety of incidents, like those of the Spaniards, or in the repetition of the same characters in the way of Terence: but the case is now very different, the publick calls for new characters and nothing else. Multiplicity of accidents, and the laborious contrivance of an intrigue, are not now allowed to shelter a weak genius that would find great conveniences in that way of writing. Nor does it suit the taste of comedy, which requires an air less constrained, and such freedom and ease of manners as admits nothing of the romantick. She leaves all the pomp of sudden events to the novels, or little romances, which were the diversion of the last age. She allows nothing but a succession of characters resembling nature, and falling in without any apparent contrivance. Racine has likewise taught us to give to tragedy the same simplicity of air and action; he has endeavoured to disentangle it from that great number of incidents, which made it rather a study than diversion to the audience, and which shew the poet not so much to abound in invention, as to be deficient in taste. But, notwithstanding all that he has done, or that we can do, to make it simple, it will always have the advantage over comedy in the number of its subjects, because it

admits more variety of situations and events, which give variety and novelty to the characters. A miser, copied after nature, will always be the miser of Plautus or Moliere; but a Nero, or a prince like Nero, will not always be the hero of Racine. Comedy admits of so little intrigue, that the miser cannot be shewn in any such position as will make his picture new; but the great events of tragedy may put Nero in such circumstances as to make him wholly another character.

But, in the second place, over and above the subjects, may we not say something concerning the final purpose of comedy and tragedy? The purpose of the one is to divert, and the other to move; and of these two, which is the easier? To go to the bottom of those purposes; to move is to strike those strings of the heart which is most natural, terror and pity: to divert is to make one laugh, a thing which indeed is natural enough, but more delicate. The gentleman and the rustick have both sensibility and tenderness of heart, perhaps in greater or less degree; but as they are men alike, the heart is moved by the same touches. They both love likewise to send their thoughts abroad, and to expand themselves in merriment; but the springs which must be touched for this purpose, are not the same in the gentleman and the rustick. The passions depend on nature, and merriment upon education. The clown will laugh at a waggery, and the gentleman only at a stroke of delicate conceit. The spectators of a tragedy, if they have but a little knowledge, are almost all on a level; but with respect to comedy, we have three classes, if not more, the people, the learned,

and the court. If there are certain cases in which all may be comprehended in the term people, this is not one of those cases. Whatever father Rapin may say about it, we are more willing even to admire than to laugh. Every man that has any power of distinction, laughs as rarely as the philosopher admires; for we are not to reckon those fits of laughter which are not incited by nature, and which are given merely to complaisance, to respect, flattery, and good-humour; such as break out at sayings which pretend to smartness in assemblies. The laughter of the theatre is of another stamp. Every reader and spectator judges of wit by his own standard, and measures it by his capacity, or by his condition? the different capacities and conditions of men make them diverted on very different occasions. If, therefore, we consider the end of the tragick and comick poet, the comedian must be involved in much more difficulties, without taking in the obstructions to be encountered equally by both, in an art which consists in raising the passions, or the mirth of a great multitude. The tragedian has little to do but to reflect upon his own thought, and draw from his heart those sentiments which will certainly make their way to the hearts of others, if he found them in his own. The other must take many forms, and change himself almost into as many persons, as he undertakes to satisfy and divert.

It may be said, that, if genius be supposed equal, and success supposed to depend upon genius, the business will be equally easy and difficult to one author and to the other. This objection is of

no weight; for the same question still recurs, which is, whether of these two kinds of genius is more valuable or more rare. If we proceed by example, and not by reasoning, we shall decide I think in favour of comedy.

It may be said, that, if merely art be considered, it will require deeper thoughts to form a plan just and simple; to produce happy surprises without apparent contrivance; to carry a passion skilfully through its gradations to its height; to arrive happily to the end by always moving from it, as Ithaca seemed to fly Ulysses; to unite the acts and scenes; and to raise by insensible degrees a striking edifice, of which the least merit shall be exactness of proportion. It may be added, that in comedy this art is infinitely less, for there the characters come upon the stage with very little artifice or plot: the whole scheme is so connected that we see it at once, and the plan and disposition of the parts make a small part of its excellence, in comparison of a gloss of pleasantry diffused over each scene, which is more the happy effect of a lucky moment, than of long consideration.

These objections, and many others, which so fruitful a subject might easily suggest, it is not difficult to refute: and if we were to judge by the impression made on the mind by tragedies and comedies of equal excellence, perhaps, when we examine those impressions, it will be found that a sally of pleasantry, which diverts all the world, required more thought than a passage which gave the highest pleasure in tragedy; and to this determination we shall be more inclined when a clo-

ser examination shall shew us, that a happy vein of tragedy is opened and effused at less expence, than a well-placed witticism in comedy has required merely to assign its place.

It would be too much to dwell long upon such a digression; and as I have no business to decide the question, I leave both that and my arguments to the taste of each particular reader, who will find what is to be said for or against it. My purpose was only to say of comedy, considered as a work of genius, all that a man of letters can be supposed to deliver without departing from his character, and without palliating in any dgree the corrupt use which has been almost always made of an exhibition which in its nature might be innocent; but has been vicious from the time that it has been infected with the wickedness of men. It is not for publick exhibitions that I am now writing, but for literary inquiries. The stage is too much frequented, and books too much neglected. Yet it is to the literature of Greece and Rome that we are indebted for that valuable taste, which will be insensibly lost by the affected negligence which now prevails of having recourse to originals. If reason has been a considerable gainer, it must be confessed that taste has been somewhat a loser.

To return to Aristophanes: so many great men of antiquity, through a long succession of ages, down to our times, have set a value upon his works, that we cannot naturally suppose them contemptible, notwithstanding the essential faults with which he may be justly reproached. It is sufficient to say, that he was esteemed by Plato and Cicero;

and to conclude by that which does him most honour, but still falls short of justification, the strong and sprightly eloquence of St Chrysostom drew its support from the masculine and vigorous atticism of this sarcastic comedian, to whom the father paid the same regard as Alexander to Homer, that of putting his works under his pillow, that he might read them at night before he slept, and in the morning as soon as he awaked.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

TO

BRUMOY'S GREEK THEATRE.

THUS I have given a faithful extract of the remains of Aristophanes. That I have not shewn them in their true form, I am not afraid that any body will complain. I have given an account of every thing as far as it was consistent with moral decency. No pen, however cynical or heathenish, would venture to produce in open day the horrid passages which I have put out of sight; and instead of regretting any part that I have suppressed, the very suppression will easily shew to what degree the Athenians were infected with licentiousness of imagination and corruption of principles. If the taste of antiquity allows us to preserve what time and barbarity have hitherto spared, religion and virtue at least oblige us not to spread it before the eyes of mankind. To end this work in an useful manner, let us examine in a few words the four particulars which are most striking in the eleven pieces of Aristophanes.

Summary of the four articles treated of in this discourse.

II. The first is the character of the ancient comedy, which has no likeness to any thing in na-

Character of ancient comedy.

ture. Its genius is so wild and strange, that it scarce admits a definition. In what class of comedy must we place it? It appears to me to be a species of writing by itself. If we had Phrynicus, Plato, Eupolis, Critinus, Ameipsias, and so many other celebrated rivals of Aristophanes, of whom all that we can find are a few fragments scattered in Plutarch, Athenias, and Suidas, we might compare them with our poet, settle the general scheme, observe the minuter differences, and form a complete notion of their comick stage. But for want of all this we can fix only on Aristophanes, and it is true that he may be in some measure sufficient to furnish a tolerable judgment of the old comedy; for if we believe him, and who can be better credited? he was the most daring of all his brethren the poets, who practised the same kind of writing. Upon this supposition we may conclude, that the comedy of those days consisted in an allegory drawn out and continued; an allegory never very regular, but often ingenious, and almost always carried beyond strict propriety, of satire keen and biting, but diversified, sprightly and unexpected; so that the wound was given before it was perceived. Their points of satire were thunderbolts, and their wild figures, with their variety and quickness, had the effect of lightning. Their imitation was carried even to resemblance of persons, and their common entertainments was a parody of rival poets joined, if I may so express it, with a parody of manners and habits.

But it would be tedious to draw out to the reader that which he will already have perceived better than myself. I have no design to anticipate his

reflections: and therefore shall only sketch the picture, which he must finish by himself; he will pursue the subject farther, and form to himself a view of the common and domestic life of the Athenians, of which this kind of comedy was a picture, with some aggravation of the features: he will bring within his view all the customs, manners, and vices, and the whole character of the people of Athens. By bringing all these together he will fix in his mind an indelible idea of a people in whom so many contrarieties were united, and who in a manner that can scarce be expressed, connected nobility with the cast of Athens, wisdom with madness, rage for novelty with a bigotry for antiquity, the politeness of a monarchy with the roughness of a republick, refinement with coarseness, independence with slavery, haughtiness with servile compliance, severity of manners with debauchery, a kind of irreligion with piety. We shall do this in reading; as in travelling through different nations we make ourselves masters of their characters by combining their different appearances, and reflecting upon what we see.

The government of the Athenians.

III. The government of Athens makes a fine part of the ancient comedy. In most states the mystery of government is confined within the walls of the cabinets; even in commonwealths it does not pass but through five or six heads, who rule those that think themselves the rulers. Oratory dares not touch it, and comedy still less. Cicero himself did not speak freely upon so nice a subject as the Roman commonwealth; but the Athenian eloquence was informed of the whole secret, and searches the

recesses of the human mind, to fetch it out and expose it to the people. Demosthenes, and his contemporaries, speak with a freedom at which we are astonished, notwithstanding the notion we have of a popular goverment, yet at what time but this did comedy adventure to claim the same rights with civil eloquence? The Italian comedy of the last age, all daring as it was, could for its boldness come into no competition with the ancient. It was limited to general satire, which was sometimes carried so far, that the malignity was overlooked in an attention to the wild exaggeration, the unexpected strokes, the pungent wit, and the malignity concealed under such wild flights as became the character of *Harlequin*. But though it so far resembled Aristophanes, our age is yet at a great distance from his, and the Italian comedy from his scenes. But with respect to the liberty of censuring the government, there can be no comparison made of one age or comedy with another. Aristophanes is the only writer of his kind, and is for that reason of the highest value. A powerful state set at the head of Greece, is the subject of his merriment, and that merriment is allowed by the state itself. This appears to us an inconsistency; but it is true that it was the interest of the state to allow it, though not always without inconveniency. It was a restraint upon the ambition and tyranny of single men, a matter of great importance to a people so very jealous of their liberty. Cleon, Alcibiades, Lamachus, and many other generals and magistrates, were kept under by fear of the comick strokes of a poet so little cautious as Aristophanes. He was once indeed in danger of

paying dear for his wit. He professed, as he tells us himself, to be of great use by his writings to the state; and rated his merit so high as to complain that he was not rewarded. But, under pretence of this publick spirit, he spared no part of the publick conduct, neither was government, councils, revenues, popular assemblies, secret proceedings in judicature, choice of ministers, the government of the nobles, or that of the people spared.

The *Acharnians*, the *Peace*, and the *Birds*, are eternal monuments of the boldness of the poet, who was not afraid of censuring the government for the obstinate continuance of a ruinous war, for undertaking new ones, and feeding itself wtih wild imaginations, and running to destruction as it did for an idle point of honour.

Nothing can be more reproachful to the Athenians than his play of the *Knights*, when he represents, under an allegory that may be easily seen through, the nation of the Athenians as an old doting fellow tricked by a new man, such as Cleon and his companions, who were of the same stamp.

A single glance upon *Lysistrata*, and the *Female Orators*, must raise astonishment when the Athenian policy is set below the schemes of women, whom the author makes ridiculous for no other reason than to bring contempt upon their husbands, who held the helm of government.

The *Wasps* is written to expose the madness of people for law-suits and litigations, and a multitude of iniquities are laid open.

It may easily be gathered, that notwithstanding the wise laws of Solon, which they still professed to follow, the government was falling into decay,

for we are not to understand the jest of Aristophanes in the literal sense. It is plain that the corruption, though we should suppose it but half as much as we are told, was very great, for it ended in the destruction of Athens, which could scarce raise its head again, after it had been taken by Lysander. Though we consider Aristophanes as a comick writer who deals in exaggeration, and bring down his stories to their true standard, we still find that the fundamentals of their government fail in almost all the essential points. That the people were inveigled by men of ambition; that all councils and decrees had their original in factious combinations; that avarice and private interest animated all their policy to the hurt of the publick; that their revenues were ill managed, their allies improperly treated; that their good citizens were sacrificed, and the bad put in places; that a mad eagerness for judicial litigation took up all their attention within, and that war was made without, not so much with wisdom and precaution, as with temerity and good luck; that the love of novelty and fashion in the manner of managing the publick affairs was a madness universally prevalent; and that Melanthius says in Plutarch, the republick of Athens was continued only by the perpetual discord of those that managed its affairs. This remedied the dishonour by preserving the equilibrium, and was kept always in action by eloquence and comedy.

This is what in general may be drawn from the reading Aristophanes. The sagacity of the readers will go farther: they will compare the different forms of government by which that tumultuous people endeavoured to regulate or increase the de-

mocracy, which forms were all fatal to the state, because they were not built upon lasting foundations, and had all in them the principles of destruction. A strange contrivance it was to perpetuate a state by changing the just proportion which Solon had wisely settled between the nobles and the people; and by opening a gate to the skilful ambition of those who had art or courage enough to force themselves into the government by means of the people, whom they flattered with protections that they might more certainly crush them.

IV. Another part of the works of Aristophanes are his pleasant reflections upon the most celebrated poets: the shafts which he lets fly at the three heroes of tragedy, and particularly at Euripides, might incline the reader to believe that he had little esteem for those great men; and that probably the spectators that applauded him were of his opinion. This conclusion would not be just, as I have already shewn by arguments, which if I had not offered them, the reader might have discovered better than I. But that I may leave no room for objections, and prevent any shadow of captiousness, I shall venture to observe, that posterity will not consider Racine as less a master of the French stage because his plays were ridiculed by parodies. Parody always fixes upon the best pieces, and was more to the taste of the Greeks than to ours. At present the high theatres give it up to stages of inferior rank; but in Athens the comick theatre considered parody as its principal ornament, for a reason which is worth examining. The ancient comedy was not like ours, a remote and delicate imi-

The tragick poets rallied.

tation; it was the art of gross mimickry, and would have been supposed to have missed its aim, had it not copied the mein, the walk, the dress, the motions of the face of those whom it exhibited. Now parody is an imitation of this kind; it is a change of serious to burlesque, by a slight variation of words, inflection of voice, or an imperceptible art of mimickry. Parody is to poetry as a masque to a face. As the tragedies of Eschylus, of Sophocles, and of Euripides, were much in fashion, and were known by memory to the people, the parodies upon them would naturally strike and please, when they were accompanied by the grimaces of a good comedian, who mimicked with archness a serious character. Such is the malignity of human nature; we love to laugh at those whom we esteem most, and by this make ourselves some recompense for the unwilling homage which we pay to merit. The parodies upon these poets made by Aristophanes, ought to be considered rather as encomiums than satires. They give us occasion to examine whether the criticisms are just or not in themselves: but what is more important, they afford no proof that Euripides or his predecessors wanted the esteem of Aristophanes or his age. The statues raised to their honour, the respect paid by the Athenians to their writings, and the careful preservation of those writings themselves, are immortal testimonies in their favour, and make it unnecessary for me to stop any longer upon so plausible a solution of so frivolous an objection.

Frequent ridicule of the gods.

V. The most troublesome difficulty, and that which, so far as I know, has not yet been cleared to satisfaction, is the contemptuous manner in

which Aristophanes treats the gods. Though I am persuaded in my own mind that I have found the true solution of this question, I am not sure that it will make more impression than that of M. Boivin, who contents himself with saying, that every thing was allowed to the comick poets; and that even atheism was permitted to the licentiousness of the stage: that the Athenians applauded all that made them laugh; and believed that Jupiter himself laughed with them at the smart saying of a poet. Mr Collier, an Englishman, in his remarks upon their stage, attempts to prove that Aristophanes was an open atheist. For my part I am not satisfied with the account either of one or the other, and think it better to venture a new system, of which I have already dropt some hints in this work. The truth is, that the Athenians professed to be great laughers; always ready for merriment on whatever subject. But it cannot be conceived that Aristophanes should, without punishment, publish himself an atheist, unless we suppose that atheism was the opinion likewise of the spectators, and of the judges commissioned to examine the plays; and yet this cannot be suspected of those who boasted themselves the most religious nation, and naturally the most superstitious of all Greece. How can we suppose those to be atheists who passed sentence upon Diagoras, Socrates, and Alcibiades, for impiety? These are glaring inconsistencies. To say like M. Boivin, for sake of getting clear of the difficulty, that Alcibiades, Socrates, and Diagoras, attacked religion seriously, and were therefore not allowed, but that Aristophanes did it in jest, or was authorised by

custom, would be to trifle with the difficulty, and not to clear it. Though the Athenians loved merriment, it is not likely that if Aristophanes had professed atheism, they would have spared him more than Socrates, who had as much life and pleasantry in his discourses, as the poet in his comedies. The pungent raillery of Aristophanes, and the fondness of the Athenians for it, are therefore not the true reason why the poet was spared when Socrates was condemned. I shall now solve the question with great brevity.

The true answer to this question is given by Plutarch in his treatise of reading of the poets. Plutarch attempts to prove that youth is not to be prohibited the reading of the poets; but to be cautioned against such parts as may have bad effects. They are first to be prepossessed with this leading principle, that poetry is false and fabulous. He then enumerates at length the fables which Homer and other poets have invented about their deities; and concludes thus: "When therefore there is "found in poetical compositions any thing strange "and shocking, with respect to gods, or demi-"gods, or concerning the virtue of any excellent "and renowned characters, he that should receive "these fictions as truth would be corrupted by an "erroneous opinion: but he that always keeps in "his mind the fables and allusions, which it is the "business of poetry to contrive, will not be in-"jured by these stories, nor receive any ill im-"pressions upon his thoughts, but will be ready "to censure himself, if at any time he happens to "be afraid, lest Neptune in his rage should split the "earth, and lay open the infernal regions." Some

pages afterwards, he tell us, "That religion is a "thing difficult of comprehension, and above the un- "derstanding of poets; which it is," says he, "ne- "cessary to have in mind when we read their fables." The Pagans therefore had their fables, which they distinguished from their religion; for no one can be persuaded that Ovid intended his *Metamorphoses* as a true representation of the religion of the Romans. The poets were allowed their imaginations about their gods, as things which had no regard to the publick worship. Upon this principle, I say, as I said before, there was amongst the Pagans two sorts of religion; one a poetical, and a real religion: one practical, the other theatrical: a mythology for the poets, a theology for use. They had fables, and a worship, which though founded upon fable, was yet very different.

Diagoras, Socrates, Plato, and the philosophers of Athens, with Cicero, their admirer, and the other pretended wise men of Rome, are men by themselves. These were the atheists with respect to the ancients. We must not therefore look into Plato, or into Cicero for the real religion of the Pagans, as distinct from the fabulous. These two authors involve themselves in the clouds, that their opinions may not be discovered. They durst not openly attack the real religion; but destroyed it by attacking fable.

To distinguish here with exactness the agreement or difference between fable and religion, is not at present my intention: it is not easy * to shew with exactness what was the Athenian notion of the nature of the gods whom they worshipped.

* See St. Paul upon the subject of the *Ignoto Deo*.

Plutarch himself tells us, that this was a thing very difficult for the philosophers. It is sufficient for me that the mythology and theology of the ancients were different at the bottom; that the names of the gods continued the same; and that long custom gave up one to the caprices of the poets, without supposing the other affected by them. This being once settled, upon the authority of the ancients themselves, I am no longer surprised to see Jupiter, Minerva, Neptune, Bacchus, appear upon the stage in the comedy of Aristophanes; and at the same time receiving incense in the temples of Athens. This is, in my opinion, the most reasonable account of a thing so obscure; and I am ready to give up my system to any other, by which the Athenians shall be made more consistent with themselves; those Athenians who sat laughing at the gods of Aristophanes, while they condemned Socrates for having appeared to despise the gods of his country.

The *Mimi* and *Pantomimes.*

VI. A word is now to be spoken of the *Mimi*, which had some relation to comedy. This appellation was, by the Greeks and Romans, given to certain dramatick performances, and to the actors that played them. The denomination sufficiently shews, that their art consisted in imitation and buffoonery. Of their works, nothing, or very little, is remaining; so that they can only be considered by the help of some passages in authors: from which little is to be learned that deserves consideration. I shall extract the substance, as I did with respect to the chorus, without losing time by defining all the different species, or producing all the quotations, which would give the reader more trouble

than instruction. He that desires fuller instructions may read Vossius, Valois, Saumaises, and Gataker, of whose compilations, however learned, I should think it shame to be the author.

The *Mimi* had their original from comedy, of which at its first appearance they made a part; for their mimick actors always played and exhibited grotesque dances in the comedies. The jealousy of rivalship afterwards broke them off from the comick actors, and made them a company by themselves. But to secure their reception, they borrowed from comedy all its drollery, wildness, grossness, and licentiousness. This amusement they added to their dances, and they produced what are now called farces, or burlettos. These farces had not the regularity or delicacy of comedies; they were only a succession of single scenes contrived to raise laughter; formed or unravelled without order and without connexion. They had no other end but to make the people laugh. Now and then there might be good sentences, like the sentences of P. Syrus, that are yet left us: but the ground-work was low comedy; and any thing of greater dignity drops in by chance. We must however imagine, that this odd species of the drama rose at length to somewhat a higher character, since we are told that Plato the philosopher laid the *Mimi* of Sophron under his pillow, and they were found there after his death. But in general we may say with truth, that it always discovered the meanness of its original, like a false pretension to nobility, in which the cheat is always discovered through the concealment of fictitious splendor.

These *Mimi* were of two sorts, of which the length was different, but the purposes the same.

The *Mimi* of one species were short; those of the other longer, and not quite so grotesque. These two kinds were subdivided into many species, distinguished by the dresses and characters, such as shews drunkards, physicians, men, and women.

Thus far of the Greeks. The Romans having borrowed of them the more noble shews of tragedy and comedy, were not content till they had their rhapsodies. They had their *planipedes*, who played with flat soles, that they might have the more agility; and their *sannions*, whose head was shaved, that they might box the better. There is no need of naming here all who had a name for these diversions among the Greeks and Romans. I have said enough, and perhaps too much of this abortion of comedy, which drew upon itself the contempt of good men, the censures of the magistrates, and the indignation of the fathers of the church*.

Another set of players were called *Pantomimes*: these were at least so far preferable to the former, that they gave no offence to the ears. They spoke only to the eyes; but with such art of expression, that, without the utterance of a single word, they represented, as we are told, a complete tragedy or comedy, in the same manner as dumb *Harlequin* is exhibited on our theatres. These *Pantomimes* among the Greeks first mingled singing with their dances; afterwards, about the time of Livius Andronicus, the songs were performed by one part, and the dances by another. Afterwards, in the time of Augustus, when they were sent for to

* It is the licentiousness of the *Mimi* and *Pantomimes*, against which the censure of the Holy Fathers particularly breaks out, as against a thing irregular and indecent, without supposing it much connected with the cause of religion.

Rome, for the diversions of the people, whom he had enslaved, they played comedies without songs or vocal utterance; but by the sprightliness, activity, and efficacy of their gestures; or, as Sidonius Apollinaris expresses it, *clausis faucibus, et loquente gestu,* they not only exhibited things and passions, but even the most delicate distinctions of passions, and the slightest circumstances of facts. We must not however imagine, at least in my opinion, that the *Pantomimes* did literally represent regular tragedies or comedies by the mere motions of their bodies. We may justly determine, notwithstanding all their agility, their representations would at last be very incomplete: yet we may suppose, with good reason, that their action was very lively; and that the art of imitation went great lengths, since it raised the admiration of the wisest men, and made the people mad with eagerness. Yet when we read that one Hylus, the pupil of one Pylades, in the time of Augustus, divided the applauses of the people with his master, when they represented *Oedipus*, or when Juvenal tells us, that Bathillus played *Leda*, and other things of the same kind, it is not easy to believe that a single man, without speaking a word, could exhibit tragedies or comedies, and make starts and bounds supply the place of vocal articulation. Notwithstanding the obscurity of this whole matter, one may know what to admit as certain, or how far a representation could be carried by dance, posture, and grimace. Among these artificial dances, of which we know nothing but the names, there was as early as the time of Aristophanes some extremely indecent. These were continued in Italy from the time of Augustus, long after the emperors. It was a

publick mischief, which contributed in some measure to the decay and ruin of the Roman empire. To have a due detestation of these licentious entertainments, there is no need of any recourse to the fathers; the wiser Pagans tell us very plainly what they thought of them. I have made this mention of the *Mimi* and *Pantomimes*, only to shew how the most noble of publick spectacles were corrupted and abused, and to conduct the reader to the end through every road, and through all the bye-paths of human wit, from Homer and Eschylus to our own time.

Wanderings of the human mind in the birth and progress of theatrical representations.

VII. That we may conclude this work by applying the principles laid down at the beginning, and extend it through the whole, I desire the reader to recur to that point where I have represented the human mind as beginning the course of the drama. The chorus was first a hymn to Bacchus, produced by accident; art brought it to perfection, and delight made it a publick diversion. Thespis made a single actor play before the people; this was the beginning of theatrical shews. Eschylus, taking the idea of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, animated, if I may so express it, the epick poem, and gave a dialogue in place of simple recitation, puts the whole into action, and sets it before the eyes, as if it was a present and real transaction: he gives the chorus * an interest in the scenes, contrives habits of dignity and theatrical de-

* Eschylus, in my opinion, as well as the other poets his contemporaries, retained the chorus, not merely because it was the fashion, but because examining tragedy to the bottom, they found it not rational to conceive, that an action

corations. In a word, he gives both to tragedy; or more properly draws it from the bosom of the epick poem. She made her appearance sparkling with graces, and displayed such majesty as gained every heart at the first view. Sophocles considers her more nearly, with the eyes of a critick, and finds that she has something still about her rough and swelling: he divests her of her false ornaments, teaches her a more regular walk, and more familiar dignity. Euripides was of opinion, that she ought to receive still more softness and tenderness; he teaches her the new art of pleasing by simplicity, and gives her the charms of graceful negligence; so that he makes her stand in suspence, whether she appears most to advantage in the dress of Sophocles sparkling with gems, or in that of Euripides, which is more simple and modest. Both indeed are elegant; but the elegance is of different kinds, between which no judgment as yet has decided the prize of superiority.

We can now trace it no farther; its progress amongst the Greeks is out of sight. We must pass at once to the time of Augustus, where Apollo and the Muses quitted their ancient residence in Greece, to fix their abode in Italy. But it is vain to ask questions of Melpomene; she is obstinately silent, and we only know from strangers her power amongst the Romans. Seneca endeavours to make her speak; but the gaudy shew with which he rather loads than adorns her, makes us think that he took some phantom of Melpomene for the Muse herself.

great and splendid, like the revolution of a state, could pass without witnesses.

Another flight, equally rapid with that to Rome, must carry us through thousands of years, from Rome to France. There in the time of Lewis XIV. we see the mind of man giving birth to tragedy a second time, as if the Greek tragedy had been utterly forgot. In the place of Eschylus, we have our Rotrou. In Corneille we have another Sophocles, and in Racine a second Euripides. Thus is tragedy raised from her ashes, carried to the utmost point of greatness, and so dazzling that she prefers herself to herself. Surprised to see herself produced again in France in so short a time, and nearly in the same manner as before in Greece, she is disposed to believe that her fate is to make a short transition from her birth to her perfection, like the goddess that issued from the brain of Jupiter.

If we look back on the other side to the rise of comedy, we shall see it hatched by Margites from the *Odyssey* of Homer, in imitation of her eldest sister; but we see her under the conduct of Aristophanes become licentious and petulant, taking airs to herself which the magistrates were obliged to crush. Menander reduced her to bounds, taught her at once gaiety and politeness, and enabled her to correct vice, without shocking the offenders. Plautus, among the Romans, to whom we must now pass, united the earlier and the later comedy, and joined buffoonery with delicacy. Terence, who was better instructed, received comedy from Menander, and surpassed his original, as he endeavoured to copy it. And lastly, Moliere produced a new species of comedy, which must be placed in a class by itself, in opposition to that of Aristophanes, whose manner is likewise peculiar to himself.

But such is the weakness of the human mind,

that when we review the successions of the drama a third time, we find genius falling from its height, forgetting itself, and led astray by the love of novelty, and the desire of striking out new paths. Tragedy degenerated in Greece from the time of Aristotle, and in Rome after Augustus. At Rome and Athens comedy produced *Mimi*, pantomimes, burlettas, tricks, and farces, for the sake of variety; such is the character, and such the madness of the mind of man. It is satisfied with having made great conquests, and gives them up to attempt others, which are far from answering its expectation, and only enables it to discover its own folly, weakness, and deviations. But why should we be tired with standing still at the true point of perfection, when it is attained? If eloquence be wearied, and forgets herself a while, yet she soon returns to her former point: so will it happen to our theatres if the French Muses will keep the Greek models in their view, and not look with disdain upon a stage whose mother is nature, whose soul is passion, and whose art is simplicity: a stage, which, to speak the truth, does not perhaps equal ours in splendor and elevation, but which excels it in simplicity and propriety, and equals it at least in the conduct and direction of those passions which may properly affect an honest man and a Christian.

For my part, I shall think myself well recompensed for my labour, and shall attain the end which I had in view, if I shall in some little measure revive in the minds of those who purpose to run the round of polite literature, not an immoderate and blind reverence, but a true taste of an-

tiquity: such a taste as both feeds and polishes the mind, and enriches it by enabling it to appropriate the wealth of foreigners, and to exert its natural fertility in exquisite productions; such a taste as gave the Racines, the Molieres, the Boileaus, the Fontaines, the Patrus, the Pelessons, and many other great geniuses of the last age, all that they were, and all that they will always be; such a taste as puts the seal of immortality to those works in which it is discovered; a taste so necessary, that without it we may be certain that the greatest powers of nature will long continue in a state below themselves; for no man ought to allow himself to be flattered or seduced by the example of some men of genius, who have rather appeared to despise this taste than to despise it in reality. It is true that excellent originals have given occasion, without any fault of their own, to very bad copies. No man ought severely to ape either the ancients or the moderns: but if it was necessary to run into an extreme of one side or the other, which is never done by a judicious and well-directed mind, it would be better for a wit, as for a painter, to enrich himself by what he can take from the ancients, than to grow poor by taking all from his own stock; or openly to affect an imitation of those moderns whose more fertile genius has produced beauties peculiar to themselves, and which themselves only can display with grace: beauties of that peculiar kind, that they are not fit to be imitated by others; though in those who first invented them they may be justly esteemed, and in them only.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

TRAGEDY OF MACBETH:

WITH

REMARKS

ON

SIR THOMAS HANMER'S EDITION

OF

SHAKESPEARE.

First Printed in the Year 1745.

" —As to all those things which have been published " under the titles of *Essays*, *Remarks*, *Observations*, &c. on " *Shakespeare*, (if you except some critical notes on *Macbeth*, " given as a specimen of a projected edition, and written, as " appears, by a man of parts and genius) the rest are abso- " lutely below a serious notice."

WARBURTON's *Preface to Shakespeare.* E.

NOTE I.

Act I. Scene I.

Enter three Witches.

In order to make a true estimate of the abilities and merit of a writer, it is always necessary to examine the genius of his age, and the opinions of his contemporaries. A poet who should now make the whole action of his tragedy depend upon enchantment, and produce the chief events by the assistance of supernatural agents, would be censured as transgressing the bounds of probability, he would be banished from the theatre to the nursery, and condemned to write Fairy Tales instead of Tragedies; but a survey of the notions that prevailed at the time when this play was written, will prove that Shakespeare was in no danger of such censures, since he only turned the system that was then universally admitted to his advantage, and was far from overburthening the credulity of his audience.

The reality of witchcraft or enchantment, which, though not strictly the same, are confounded in this play, has in all ages and countries been credited by the common people, and in most by the learned themselves. These phantoms have indeed appeared more frequently, in proportion as the darkness of ignorance has been more gross; but it cannot be shown, that the brightest gleams of knowledge have at any time been sufficient to drive

them out of the world. The time in which this kind of credulity was at its height, seems to have been that of the holy war, in which the Christians imputed all their defeats to enchantment or diabolical opposition, as they ascribe their success to the assistance of their military saints; and the learned Mr Warburton appears to believe (*Suppl. to the Introduction to Don Quixote*) that the first accounts of enchantments were brought into this part of the world by those *who* returned from their eastern expeditions. But there is always some distance between the birth and maturity of folly as of wickedness: this opinion had long existed, though perhaps the application of it had in no foregoing age been so frequent, nor the reception so general. Olympiodorus, in Photius's Extracts, tells us of one Libanius, who practised this kind of military magick, and having promised χώρια ὁπλίτων καὶ βαρβάρων ἐπιγεῖν, *to perform great things against the Barbarians without soldiers*, was, at the instance of the empress Placidia, put to death, when he was about to have given proofs of his abilities. The empress shewed some kindness in her anger by cutting him off at a time so convenient for his reputation.

But a more remarkable proof of the antiquity of this notion may be found in St Chrysostom's book *de Sacerdotio*, which exhibits a scene of enchantments not exceeded by any romance of the middle age; he supposes a spectator, overlooking a field of battle, attended by one that points out all the various objects of horror, the engines of destruction, and the arts of slaughter. Δεικνύτω δέ σοι καὶ παρὰ τοῖς ἐναντίοις ἡ πόλεμος ἵππους διὰ τῶν

μαγ[ανείαι, καὶ ὁπλίτας δι' ἀέρος φερομένους, καὶ πᾶσαν γοητείας δύναμιν καὶ ἰδέαν. *Let him then proceed to show him in the opposite armies horses flying by enchantment, armed men transported through the air, and every power and form of magick.* Whether St Chrysostom believed that such performances were really to be seen in a day of battle, or only endeavoured to enliven his description, by adopting the notions of the vulgar, it is equally certain, that such notions were in his time received, and that therefore they were not imported from the Saracens in a later age; the wars with the Saracens, however, gave occasion to their propagation, not only as bigotry naturally discovers prodigies, but as the scene of action was removed to a greater distance, and distance either of time or place is sufficient to reconcile weak minds to wonderful relations.

The Reformation did not immediately arrive at its meridian, and though day was gradually increasing upon us, the goblins of witchcraft still continued to hover in the twilight. In the time of Queen Elizabeth was the remarkable trial of the witches of Warbois, whose conviction is still commemorated in an annual sermon at Huntingdon. But in the reign of King James, in which this tragedy was written, many circumstances concurred to propagate and confirm this opinion. The king, who was much celebrated for his knowledge, had, before his arrival in England, not only examined in person a woman accused of witchcraft, but had given a very formal account of the practices and illusions of evil spirits, the compacts of witches, the ceremonies used by them, the manner of detecting

them, and the justice of punishing them, in his dialogues of *Dæmonologie*, written in the Scottish dialect, and published at Edinburgh. This book was, soon after his accession, reprinted at London; and as the ready way to gain king James's favour was to flatter his speculations, the system of *Dæmonologie* was immediately adopted by all who desired either to gain preferment or not to lose it. Thus the doctrine of witchcraft was very powerfully inculcated, and as the greatest part of mankind have no other reason for their opinions than that they are in fashion, it cannot be doubted but this persuasion made a rapid progress, since vanity and credulity co-operated in its favour, and it had a tendency to free cowardice from reproach. The infection soon reached the parliament, who, in the first year of king James, made a law, by which it was enacted, *ch.* xii. That "if any person shall "use any invocation or conjuration of any evil or "wicked spirit; 2. Or shall consult, covenant "with, entertain, employ, feed, or reward any evil "or cursed spirit to or for any intent or purpose; "3. Or take up any dead man, woman, or child "out of the grave,—or the skin, bone, or any "part of the dead person, to be employed or used "in any manner of witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or "enchantment; 4. Or shall use, practise, or exercise any sort of witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or "enchantment; 5. Whereby any person shall be "destroyed, killed, wasted, consumed, pined, or "lamed in any part of the body; 6. That every "such person, being convicted, shall suffer death."

Thus, in the time of Shakespeare, was the doctrine of witchcraft at once established by law and

by the fashion, and it became not only unpolite, but criminal, to doubt it; and as prodigies are always seen in proportion as they are expected, witches were every day discovered, and multiplied so fast in some places, that bishop Hall mentions a village in Lancashire, where their number was greater than that of the houses. The Jesuits and Sectaries took advantage of this universal error, and endeavoured to promote the interest of their parties by pretended cures of persons afflicted by evil spirits, but they were detected and exposed by the clergy of the established church.

Upon this general infatuation Shakespeare might be easily allowed to found a play, especially since he has followed with great exactness such histories as were then thought true; nor can it be doubted that the scenes of enchantment, however they may now be ridiculed, were both by himself and his audience thought awful and affecting.

NOTE II.

Scene ii.

——The merciless *Macdonel*,—from the Western Isles
Of *Kerns* and *Gallow-glasses* was supply'd,
And fortune on his damned *quarry* smiling;
Shew'd like a rebel's whore.

Kerns are light-armed, and *Gallow-glasses* heavy armed soldiers. The word *quarry* has no sense

that is properly applicable in this place, and therefore it is necessary to read,

And fortune on his damned quarrel *smiling.*

Quarrel was formerly used for *cause*, or for *the occasion of a quarrel*, and is to be found in that sense in Hollingshed's account of the story of *Macbeth*, who, upon the creation of the prince of Cumberland, thought, says the historian, that he had *a just quarrel* to endeavour after the crown. The sense therefore is *fortune smiling on his execrable cause*, &c.

NOTE III.

If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks,
So they redoubled strokes upon the foe.

Mr Theobald has endeavoured to improve the sense of this passage by altering the punctuation thus:

——— They
As cannons overcharg'd, with double cracks
So they redoubled strokes—— ——

He declares, with some degree of exultation, that he has no idea of *a cannon charged with double cracks*; but surely the great author will not gain much by an alteration which makes him say of a hero, that he *redoubles strokes with double cracks*, an expression not more loudly to be applauded, or

more easily pardoned, than that which is rejected in its favour. That *a cannon is charged with thunder*, or *with double thunders*, may be written, not only without nonsense, but with elegance; and nothing else is here meant by *cracks*, which in the time of this writer was a word of such emphasis and dignity, that in this play he terms the general dissolution of nature the *crack of doom*.

There are among Mr Theobald's alterations others which I do not approve, though I do not always censure them; for some of his amendments are so excellent, that, even when he has failed, he ought to be treated with indulgence and respect.

NOTE IV.

King. But who comes here?
Mal. The worthy Thane of Rosse.
Lenox. What haste looks through his eyes?
So should he look, that *seems* to speak things strange.

The meaning of this passage as it now stands is, *so should he look, that looks as if he told things strange*. But *Rosse* neither yet told strange things, nor could look as if he told them; *Lenox* only conjectured from his air that he had strange things to tell, and therefore undoubtedly said,

——What haste looks thro' his eyes?
So should he look that *seems* to speak things strange.

He looks like one that is big with something of im-

portance, a metaphor so natural, that it is every day used in common discourse.

NOTE V.

SCENE III.

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

1*st Witch.* WHERE hast thou been, sister?
2*d Witch.* Killing swine.
3*d Witch.* Sister, where thou?
1*st Witch.* A sailor's wife had chesnuts in her lap,
And mouncht, and mouncht, and mouncht. Give me, quoth I.
(1) Aroint thee, witch, the rump-fed ronyon cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the Tiger:
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And, like a rat without a tail,
I'll do—I'll do—and I'll do.
2*d Witch.* I'll give thee a wind.
1*st Witch.* Thou art kind.
3*d Witch.* And I another.
1*st Witch.* I myself have all the other,
And the (2) very points they blow,
All the quarters that they know,
I' th' Ship-man's card———
I will drain him dry as hay;
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his pent-house lid;
He shall live a man (3) forbid;

Weary sev'n-nights nine times nine,
Shall he dwindle, peak and pine:
Tho' his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tost.
Look what I have.
2d Witch. Shew me, shew me.

(1) Aroint thee, witch,———

In one of the folio editions the reading is *anoint thee*, in a sense very consistent with the common accounts of witches, who are related to perform many supernatural acts by the means of unguents, and particularly to fly through the air to the places where they meet at their hellish festivals. In this sense *anoint thee, witch*, will mean, *away, witch, to your infernal assembly*. This reading I was inclined to favour, because I had met with the word *aroint* in no other place; till looking into Hearne's Collections, I found it in a very old drawing, that he has published, in which St Patrick is represented visiting hell, and putting the devils into great confusion by his presence, of whom one that is driving the damned before him with a prong, has a libel issuing out from his mouth with these words, out out arongt, of which the last is evidently the same with *aroint*, and used in the same sense as in this passage.

(2) And the *very* points they blow.

As the word *very* is here of no other use than to fill up the verse, it is likely that Shakespeare wrote *various*, which might be easily mistaken for

very, being either negligently read, hastily pronounced, or imperfectly heard.

(3) He shall live a man *forbid*.

Mr Theobald has very justly explained *forbid* by *accursed*, but without giving any reason of his interpretation. To *bid* is originally *to pray*, as in this Saxon fragment.

Þe ıſ Vıſ ꝥ bıꝛ ⁊ boꝛe, &c.
He is wise that *prays* & improves.

As to *forbid* therefore implies to *prohibit*, in opposition to the word *bid* in its present sense, it signifies by the same kind of opposition to *curse*, when it is derived from the same word in its primitive meaning.

NOTE VI.

Scene v.

The incongruity of all the passages in which the *Thane* of *Cawdor* is mentioned is very remarkable; in the second scene the *Thanes* of *Rosse* and *Angus* bring the king an account of the battle, and inform him that *Norway*,

Assisted by that most disloyal traytor
The Thane of Cawdor, 'gan a dismal conflict.

It appears that *Cawdor* was taken prisoner, for the king says in the same scene,

——Go, pronounce his death,
And with his former title greet Macbeth.

Yet though *Cawdor* was thus taken by *Macbeth*, in arms against his king, when *Macbeth* is saluted, in the fourth scene, *Thane of Cawdor*, by the Weird Sisters, he asks,

How of Cawdor? the Thane of Cawdor lives
A prosp'rous gentleman.——

And in the next line considers the promises, that he should be *Cawdor* and *King*, as equally unlikely to be accomplished. How can *Macbeth* be ignorant of the state of the *Thane* of *Cawdor*, whom he has just defeated and taken prisoner, or call him a *prosperous Gentleman* who has forfeited his title and life by open rebellion? Or why should he wonder that the title of the rebel whom he has overthrown should be conferred upon him? He cannot be supposed to dissemble his knowledge of the condition of *Cawdor*, because he enquires with all the ardour of curiosity, and the vehemence of sudden astonishment; and because no body is present but *Banquo*, who had an equal part in the battle, and was equally acquainted with Cawdor's treason. However, in the next scene, his ignorance still continues; and, when *Rosse* and *Angus* present him from the king with his new title, he cries out,

——The Thane of Cawdor lives.
Why do you dress me in his borrowed robes?

Rosse and *Angus*, who were the messengers that in the second scene informed the king of the assistance given by *Cawdor* to the invader, having lost, as well as *Macbeth*, all memory of what they had so lately seen and related, make this answer,

——Whether he was
Combin'd with Norway, or did line the rebels
With hidden help and vantage, or with both
He labour'd in his country's wreck, I know not.

Neither *Rosse* knew what he had just reported, nor *Macbeth* what he had just done. This seems not to be one of the faults that are to be imputed to the transcribers, since, though the inconsistency of *Rosse* and *Angus* might be removed, by supposing that their names are erroneously inserted, and that only *Rosse* brought the account of the battle, and only *Angus* was sent to compliment *Macbeth*, yet the forgetfulness of *Macbeth* cannot be palliated, since what he says could not have been spoken by any other.

NOTE VII.

THE thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man,——

The *single state of man* seems to be used by Shakespeare for an *individual*, in opposition to a *commonwealth*, or *conjunct body* of men.

NOTE VIII.

Macbeth. ——Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs thro' the roughest day.

I suppose every reader is disgusted at the tautology in this passage, *time and the hour*, and will therefore willingly believe that Shakespeare wrote it thus,

——Come what come may,
Time! on!—the hour runs thro' the roughest day.

Macbeth is deliberating upon the events which are to befal him; but finding no satisfaction from his own thoughts, he grows impatient of reflection, and resolves to wait the close without harassing himself with conjectures,

———Come what come may.

But to shorten the pain of suspense, he calls upon time in the usual stile of ardent desire, to quicken his motion,

Time! on!——

He then comforts himself with the reflection that all his perplexity must have an end,

——The hour runs thro' the roughest day.

This conjecture is supported by the passage in the letter to his lady, in which he says, *They referr'd me to the* coming on of time *with Hail King that shall be.*

NOTE IX.

Scene vi.

Malcolm. ——Nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it. He died,
As one that had been studied in his death,
To throw away the dearest thing he *ow'd,*
As 'twere a careless trifle.

As the word *ow'd* affords here no sense but such as is forced and unnatural, it cannot be doubted that it was originally written, *The dearest thing he own'd;* a reading which needs neither defence nor explication.

NOTE X.

King. ——There's no art,
To find the mind's construction in the face.

The *construction of the mind* is, I believe, a phrase peculiar to Shakespeare; it implies the *frame* or *disposition* of the mind, by which it is determined to good or ill.

NOTE XI.

Macbeth. THE service, and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itself. Your highness' part
Is to receive our duties, and our duties
Are to your throne and state, children and servants,
Which do but what they should, in doing *every thing*
Safe tow'rds your love and honour.

Of the last line of this speech, which is certainly, as it is now read, unintelligible, an emendation has been attempted, which Mr Warburton and Mr Theobald have admitted as the true reading.

—— Our duties
Are to your throne and state, children and servants,
Which do but what they should, in doing every thing
Fiefs to your love and honour.

My esteem of these criticks, inclines me to believe, that they cannot be much pleased with the expressions *Fiefs to love*, or *Fiefs to honour;* and that they have proposed this alteration rather because no other occurred to them, than because they approved it. I shall therefore propose a bolder change, perhaps with no better success, but *suæ quique placent.* I read thus,

—— Our duties
Are to your throne and state, children and servants,
Which do but what they should in doing *nothing*
Save tow'rds *your love and honour.*

We do but perform our duty when we contract all our views to your service, when we act with *no other* principle than regard to *your love and honour.*

It is probable that this passage was first corrupted by writing *safe* for *save*, and the lines then stood thus,

——Doing nothing
Safe tow'rd your love and honour.

Which the next transcriber observing to be wrong, and yet not being able to discover the real fault, altered to the present reading.

NOTE XII.

SCENE VII.

——THOU'DST have, great Glamis,
That which cries, "Thus thou must do if thou have *it*,
"And that," &c.

As the object of *Macbeth's* desire is here introduced speaking of itself, it is necessary to read,

——Thou'dst have, great Glamis,
That which cries, "Thus thou must do if thou have *me.*"

NOTE XIII.

——HIE thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,

And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
That fate and metaphysical aid do *seem*
To have thee crown'd withal.

For *seem* the sense evidently directs us to read *seek*. The crown to which fate destines thee, and which preternatural agents *endeavour* to bestow upon thee. The *golden round* is the *diadem*.

NOTE XIV.

Lady Macbeth ——Come all you spirits
That tend on *mortal thoughts*, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to th' toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty; make thick my blood,
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor *keep peace* between
Th' effect and it.

Mortal thoughts.

This expression signifies not *the thoughts of mortals*, but, *murtherous*, *deadly*, or *destructive designs*. So in act 5th.

Hold fast the *mortal* sword.

And in another place,

With twenty *mortal* murthers,

—— Nor keep pace between
Th' effect and it.

The intent of Lady *Macbeth*, evidenty is to wish that no womanish tenderness, or conscientious remorse may hinder her purpose from proceeding to effect, but neither this nor indeed any other sense is expressed by the present reading, and therefore it cannot be doubted that Shakespeare wrote differently, perhaps thus:

That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor *keep pace* between
Th' effect and it.

To *keep pace between*, may signify *to pass between*, to *intervene*. *Pace* is on many occasions a favourite of Shakespeare. This phrase is indeed not usual in this sense, but was it not its novelty that gave occasion to the present corruption?

NOTE XV.

SCENE VIII.

King. THIS castle hath a pleasant *seat*; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.
Banquo. This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting Martlet, does approve,
By his ov'd mansionary, that heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here. No jutting frieze,

Buttrice, nor coigne of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed, and procreant cradle:
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observ'd
The air is delicate.

In this short scene, I propose a slight alteration to be made, by substituting *site* for *seat*, as the ancient word for *situation;* and *sense* for *senses*, as more agreeable to the measure; for which reason likewise I have endeavoured to adjust this passage,

——— Heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here. No jutting frieze,

By changing the punctuation and adding a syllable thus,

——— Heaven's breath
Smells wooingly. Here is no jutting frieze.

Those who have perused books printed at the time of the first editions of Shakespeare know, that greater alterations than these are necessary almost in every page, even where it is not to be doubted that the copy was correct.

NOTE XVI.

Scene I.

The arguments by which Lady *Macbeth* persuades her husband to commit the murder, afford a proof of Shakespeare's knowledge of human nature.

She urges the excellence and dignity of courage, a glittering idea which has dazzled mankind from age to age, and animated sometimes the house-breaker, and sometimes the conqueror: but this sophism Macbeth has for ever destroyed by distinguishing true from false fortitude, in a line and a half; of which it may almost be said, that they ought to bestow immortality on the author, though all his other productions had been lost.

> I dare do all that may become a man,
> Who dares do more is none.

This topick, which has been always employed with too much success, is used in this scene with peculiar propriety, to a soldier by a woman. Courage is the distinguishing virtue of a soldier, and the reproach of cowardice cannot be borne by any man from a woman, without great impatience.

She then urges the oaths by which he had bound himself to murder *Duncan*, another art of sophistry by which men have sometimes deluded their consciences, and persuaded themselves that what would be criminal in others is virtues in them; this argument Shakespeare, whose plan obliged him to make *Macbeth* yield, has not confuted, though he might easily have shown that a former obligation could not be vacated by a latter.

NOTE XVII.

> Letting *I dare not*, wait upon *I would*,
> Like the poor cat i' th' adage.

The adage alluded to is, *The cat loves fish, but dares not wet her foot,*

Catus amat pisces, sed non vult tingere plantas.

NOTE XVIII.

WILL I with wine and wassel so convince.

To convince is in Shakespeare to *over-power* or *subdue*, as in this play,

——Their malady *convinces*
The great assay of art.

NOTE XIX.

——WHO shall bear the guilt
Of our great *quell.*

Quell is *murder*, *manquellers* being in the old language the term for which *murderers* is now used.

NOTE XX.

ACT II. SCENE II.

——Now o'er one half the world
(1) *Nature seems dead*, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; now witchcraft celebrates
Pale *Hecat's* offerings; and wither'd murder,

(Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch) thus with his stealthy pace,
With (2) *Tarquin's ravishing sides*, tow'rds his design
Moves like a ghost—Thou sound and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my where-about,
And (3) *take the present horror from the time,*
That now suits with it.——

(1)——Now o'er one half the world
Nature seems dead.

That is, *over our hemisphere all action and motion seem to have ceased.* This image, which is perhaps the most striking that poetry can produce, has been adopted by Dryden in his conquest of Mexico.

All things are hush'd as nature's self lay dead,
The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head;
The little birds in dreams their songs repeat,
And sleeping flow'rs beneath the night-dews sweat,
Even lust and envy sleep!

These lines, though so well known, I have transcribed, that the contrast between them and this passage of Shakespeare may be more accurately observed.

Night is described by two great poets, but one describes a night of quiet, the other of perturbation. In the night of Dryden, all the disturbers of the world are laid asleep; in that of Shakespeare, nothing but sorcery, lust, and murder is awake. He that reads Dryden, finds himself lulled with serenity, and disposed to soli[illegible]

templation. He that peruses Shakespeare, looks round alarmed, and starts to find himself alone. One is the night of a lover, the other that of a murderer.

(2)———*Wither'd murder.*
———*Thus with his stealthy pace,*
With Tarquin's ravishing sides tow'rd his design,
Moves like a ghost.——

This was the reading of this passage in all the editions before that of Mr Pope, who for *sides*, inserted in the text *strides*, which Mr Theobald has tacitly copied from him, though a more proper alteration might perhaps have been made. A *ravishing stride* is an action of violence, impetuosity, and tumult, like that of a savage rushing on his prey; whereas the poet is here attempting to exhibit an image of secrecy and caution, of anxious circumspection and guilty timidity, the *stealthy pace* of a *ravisher* creeping into the chamber of a virgin, and of an assassin approaching the bed of him whom he proposes to murder, without awaking him; these he describes as *moving like ghosts*, whose progression is so different from *strides*, that it has been in all ages represented to be, as Milton expresses it,

Smooth sliding without step.

This hemistick will afford the true reading of this place, which is, I think, to be corrected thus;

——And wither'd murder,
——Thus with his stealthy pace,

With *Tarquin* ravishing, slides tow'rd his design,
Moves like a ghost.

Tarquin is in this place the general name of a ravisher, and the sense is, Now is the time in which every one is a-sleep, but those who are employed in wickedness, the witch who is sacrificing to *Hecate*, and the ravisher and the murderer, who, like me, are stealing upon their prey.

When the reading is thus adjusted, he wishes with great propriety, in the following lines, that the earth may not *hear his steps*.

(3) And take the present horror from the time
That now suits with it.

I believe every one that has attentively read this dreadful soliloquy is disappointed at the conclusion, which, if not wholly unintelligible, is, at least, obscure, nor can be explained into any sense worthy of the author. I shall therefore propose a slight alteration.

——Thou sound and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
The very stones prate of my where-about,
And *talk*—the present horror of the time!——
That now suits with it——

Macbeth has, in the foregoing lines, disturbed his imagination by enumerating all the terrors of the night; at length he is wrought up to a degree of frenzy, that makes him afraid of [illegible] tural discovery of his design, and [illegible]

stones not to betray him, not to declare where he walks, nor *to talk*.—As he is going to say of what, he discovers the absurdity of his suspicion and pauses, but is again o'erwhelmed by his guilt, and concludes, that such are the horrors of the present night, that the stones may be expected to cry out against him.

That now suits with it.

He observes in a subsequent passage, that on such occasions *stones have been known to move.* It is now a very just and strong picture of a man about to commit a deliberate murder under the strongest conviction of the wickedness of his design.

NOTE XXI.

SCENE IV.

Lenox. THE night has been unruly; where we lay
Our chimnies were blown down. And, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' th' air, strange screams of death,
And prophecying with accents terrible
Of dire combustions, and confused events,
New-hatch'd to the woful time.
The obscure bird clamour'd the live-long night,
Some say the earth was fev'rous and did shake.

These lines I think should be rather regulated thus:

——Prophecying with accents terrible,
Of dire combustions and confused events.
New-hatch'd to th' woful time, the obscure bird
Clamour'd the live-long night. Some say the earth
was fev'rous and did shake.

A *prophecy* of an *event new-hatch'd*, seems to be a *prophecy* of an *event past*. The term *new-hatch'd* is properly applicable to a *bird*, and that birds of ill omen should be *new-hatch'd to the woful time*, is very consistent with the rest of the prodigies here mentioned, and with the universal disorder into which nature is described as thrown, by the perpetration of this horrid murder.

NOTE XXII.

——Up! Up! and see
The great doom's image *Malcolm*, *Banquo*,
As from your graves rise up.——

The second line might have been so easily completed, that it cannot be supposed to have been left imperfect by the author, who probably wrote,

——*Malcolm! Banquo!* rise!
As from your graves rise up.——

Many other emendations of the same kind might be made, without any greater deviation from the printed copies, than is found in [illegible] them from the rest.

NOTE XXIII.

Macbeth. ——HERE lay Duncan,
His silver skin laced with his golden blood,
And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature,
For ruin's wasteful entrance; there the murtherers
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breech'd with gore:——

An *unmannerly dagger* and a *dagger breeched*, or as in some editions *breach'd with gore*, are expressions not easily to be understood, nor can it be imagined that Shakespeare would reproach the murderer of his king only with *want of manners*. There are undoubtedly two faults in this passage, which I have endeavoured to take away by reading,

—— *Daggers*
Unmanly drench'd with gore.——

I saw drench'd *with the king's blood the fatal daggers, not only instruments of murder, but evidences of cowardice.*

Each of these words might easily be confounded with that which I have substituted for it by a hand not exact, a casual blot, or a negligent inspection.

Mr Pope has endeavoured to improve one of these lines, by substituting *goary blood*, for *golden blood*, but it may easily be admitted, that he who could on such an occasion talk of *lacing the silver skin* would *lace it* with *golden blood*. No amendment

can be made to this line, of which every word is equally faulty, but by a general blot.

It is not improbable, that Shakespeare put these forced and unnatural metaphors into the mouth of *Macbeth*, as a mark of artifice and dissimulation, to show the difference between the studied language of hypocrisy, and the natural outcries of sudden passion. This whole speech, considered in this light, is a remarkable instance of judgment, as it consists entirely of antitheses and metaphors.

NOTE XXIV.

ACT III. SCENE II.

Macbeth. ——OUR fears in Banquo
Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would be fear'd. 'Tis much he dares,
And to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he,
Whose being I do fear: and under him,
My genius is rebuk'd; (1) *as it is said*
Anthony's was by Cæsar. He chid the sisters,
When first they put the name of king upon me,
And bade them speak to him; then, prophet-like,
They hail'd him father to a line of kings,
Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If 'tis so,
For Banquo's issue have I 'fil'd my mind,

For them the gracious Duncan have I murther'd,
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
Only for them, and mine eternal jewel
Given to the (2) common enemy of man,
To make them kings,—the seed of Banquo kings.
Rather than so, come fate into the list,
(3) And champion me to th' utterance———

(1)——As it is said,
Anthony's was by *Cæsar*.

Though I would not often assume the critick's privilege, of being confident where certainty cannot be obtained, nor indulge myself too far in departing from the established reading; yet I cannot but propose the rejection of this passage, which I believe was an insertion of some player, that having so much learning as to discover to what Shakespeare alluded, was not willing that his audience should be less knowing than himself, and has therefore weakened the author's sense by the intrusion of a remote and useless image into a speech bursting from a man wholly possessed with his own present condition, and therefore not at leisure to explain his own allusions to himself. If these words are taken away, by which not only the thought but the numbers are injured, the lines of Shakespeare close together, without any traces of a breach.

My genius is rebuk'd. He chid the sisters.

(2)——The common enemy of man.

It is always an entertainment to an inquisitive reader, to trace a sentiment to its original source,

and therefore, though the term *enemy of man* applied to the devil is in itself natural and obvious, yet some may be pleased with being informed, that Shakespeare probably borrowed it from the first lines of the Destruction of Troy, a book which he is known to have read.

That this remark may not appear too trivial, I shall take occasion from it to point out a beautiful passage of Milton, evidently copied from a book of no greater authority: in describing the gates of hell, book ii. v. 879. he says,

——— On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder.

In the history of *Don Bellianes*, when one of the knights approaches, as I remember, the castle of *Brandezar*, the gates are said to open *grating harsh thunder upon their brazen hinges*.

(3)———Come fate into the lists,
And champion me to the utterance.——

This passage will be best explained by translating it into the language from whence the only word of difficulty in it is borrowed. *Que la destinée se rende en lice, et qu'elle me donne un defi* a l'outrance. A challenge or a combat *a l'outrance, to extremity*, was a fixed term in the law of arms, used when the combatants engaged with an *odium internecinum, an intention to destroy each other*, in opposi-

tion to trials of skill at festivals, or on other occasions, where the contest was only for reputation or a prize. The sense therefore is, *Let fate, that has fore-doom'd the exaltation of the sons of Banquo, enter the lists against me, with the utmost animosity, in defence of its own decrees, which I will endeavour to invalidate, whatever be the danger.*

NOTE XXV.

Macbeth. Ay, in the catalogue, ye go for men,
As hounds and grey-hounds, mungrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs, water-ruggs, and demy-wolves are clept
All by the name of dogs.

Though this is not the most sparkling passage in the play, and though the name of a dog is of no great importance, yet it may not be improper to remark, that there is no such species of dogs as *shoughs* mentioned by *Caius de Canibus Britannicis*, or any other writer that has fallen into my hands, nor is the word to be found in any dictionary which I have examined. I therefore imagined that it is falsely printed for *slouths*, a kind of slow hound bred in the southern parts of England, but was informed by a lady, that it is more probably used, either by a mistake, or according to the orthography of that time, for *shocks*.

NOTE XXVI.

Macbeth. ——In this hour at most,
I will advise you where to plant yourselves,
Acquaint you with th' perfect spy o' th' time,
The moment on't, for't must be done to-night,
And something from the palace:————

What is meant by *the spy of the time*, it will be found difficult to explain; and therefore sense will be cheaply gained by a slight alteration.—*Macbeth* is assuring the assassins that they shall not want directions to find *Banquo*, and therefore says,

I will———
Acquaint you with a perfect spy *o' th' time.*

Accordingly a third murderer joins them afterwards at the place of action.

Perfect is *well instructed*, or *well informed*, as in this play,

Though in your state of honour I am *perfect.*

Though I am well acquainted *with your quality and rank.*

NOTE XXVII.

SCENE IV.

2d Murderer. He needs not to mistrust, since he delivers
Our offices and what we have to do,
To the direction just.

Mr Theobald has endeavoured unsuccessfully to amend this passage, in which nothing is faulty but the punctuation. The meaning of this abrupt dialogue is this: The *perfect spy*, mentioned by *Macbeth* in the foregoing scene has, before they enter upon the stage, given them the directions which were promised at the time of their agreement; and therefore one of the murderers observes, that, since *he has given them such exact information, he needs not doubt of their performance.* Then by way of exhortation to his associates he cries out

——— To the direction just.

Now nothing remains but that we conform exactly to Macbeth's directions.

NOTE XXVIII.

SCENE V.

Macbeth. You know your own degrees, sit down:
At first and last the hearty welcome.

As this passage stands, not only the numbers are very imperfect, but the sense, if any can be found, weak and contemptible. The numbers will be improved by reading.

——— Sit down, at first,
And last a hearty welcome.

But for *last* should then be written *next*. I believe the true reading is,

You know your own degrees, sit down.—To first
And last the hearty welcome.

All of whatever degree, from the highest to the lowest, may be assured that their visit is well received.

NOTE XXIX.

Macbeth. ——THERE'S blood upon thy face.
[*To the murderer aside at the door.*
Murderer. 'Tis Banquo's then.
Macbeth. 'Tis better *thee without, than he within.*

The sense apparently requires that this passage should be read thus:

'Tis better *thee* without, than *him* within.

That is, *I am more pleased that the blood of Banquo should be on thy face, than in his body.*

NOTE XXX.

Lady Macbeth. PROPER stuff!
This is the very painting of your fear:
[*Aside to Macbeth.*
This is the air-drawn dagger which you said
Led you to Duncan. Oh, these flaws and starts,
Impostures to true fear, would well become
A woman's story at a winter's fire,
Authoriz'd by her grandam. Shame itself!
Why do you make such faces? When all's done
You look but on a stool.

As *starts* can neither with propriety nor sense be called *impostures to true fear*, something else was undoubtedly intended by the author, who perhaps wrote

———Those flaws and starts,
Impostures true to fear, would well become
A woman's story.———

These symptoms of terror and amazement might better become *impostors true* only *to fear, might become a coward at the recital of such falsehoods as no man could credit whose understanding was not weakened by his terrors; tales, told by a woman over a fire on the authority of her grandam.*

NOTE XXXI.

Macbeth.——Love and health to all!
Then I'll sit down: give me some wine, fill full—
I drink to th' general joy of the whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo whom we miss,
Would he were here! to all, and him, we thirst,
And all to all.———

Though this passage is, as it now stands, capable of more meanings than one, none of them are very satisfactory; and therefore I am inclined to read it thus:

——To all, and him, we thirst,
And hail to all.

Macbeth, being about to salute his company with a bumper, declares that he includes *Banquo*, though absent, in this act of kindness, and wishes *health* to all. *Hail* or *heil* for *health* was in such continual use among the good-fellows of ancient times, that a drinker was called a *was-heiler*, or a *wisher of health*, and the liquor was termed *was-heil*, because *health* was so often *wished* over it. Thus in the lines of Hanvil the Monk,

Jamque vagante scypho, discincto gutture was-heil
Ingeminant was-heil: *labor est plus perdere vini,*
Quam sitis.————

These words were afterwards corrupted into *wassail* and *wassailer*.

NOTE XXXII.

Macbeth. ——CAN such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud
Without our special wonder? You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I *owe*,
When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheek,
When mine is blanched with fear.

This passage, as it now stands, is unintelligible, but may be restored to sense by a very slight alteration,

———You make me strange
Ev'n to the disposition that I *know*.

Though I had before seen many instances of your courage, yet it now appears in a degree altogether new. *So that my* long acquaintance *with your* disposition *does not hinder me from that astonishment which* novelty *produces.*

NOTE XXXIII.

It will have blood, they say blood will have blood,
Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak,
Augurs, that understood relations, have
By magpies, and by choughs, and rooks brought forth
The secret'st man of blood.———

In this passage the first line loses much of its force by the present punctuation. *Macbeth* having considered the prodigy which has just appeared, infers justly from it, that the death of *Duncan* cannot pass unpunished,

It will have blood,——

Then after a short pause, declares it as the general observation of mankind, that murderers cannot escape.

——*They say, blood will have blood.*

Murderers, when they have practised all human means of security, are detected by supernatural directions.

Augurs, that understand relations, &c.

By the word *relation* is understood the *connection* of effects with causes; to *understand relations* as *an augur* is to know how those things *relate to* each other *which have no* visible combination or dependence.

NOTE XXXIV.

Scene vii.

Enter Lenox *and another Lord.*

As this tragedy, like the rest of Shakespeare's, is perhaps overstocked with personages, it is not easy to assign a reason, why a nameless character should be introduced here, since nothing is said that might not with equal propriety have been put into the mouth of any other disaffected man. I believe, therefore, that in the original copy, it was written with a very common form of contraction, *Lenox* and *An.* for which the transcriber, instead of *Lenox* and *Angus*, set down *Lenox* and *another Lord.* The author had indeed been more indebted to the transcriber's fidelity and diligence, had he committed no erorrs of greater importance.

NOTE XXXV.

Act iv. Scene i.

As this is the chief scene of enchantment in the play, it is proper in this place to observe, with how much judgment Shakespeare has selected all the circumstances of his infernal ceremonies, and how exactly he has conformed to common opinions and traditions.

Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.

The usual form in which familiar spirits are reported to converse with witches, is that of a cat.

A witch who was tried about half a century before the time of Shakespeare, had a cat named *Rutterkin*, as the spirit of one of those witches was *Grimalkin*; and when any mischief was to be done, she used to bid *Rutterkin go and fly*; but once when, she would have sent *Rutterkin* to torment a daughter of the countess of Rutland, instead of *going*, or *flying*, he only cried *mew*, from which she discovered that the lady was out of his power, the power of witches being not universal, but limited, as Shakespeare has taken care to inculcate:

Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest tost.

The common afflictions which the malice of witches produced were melancholy, fits, and loss of flesh, which are threatened by one of Shakespeare's witches:

Weary sev'n-nights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine.

It was likewise their practice to destroy the cattle of their neighbours, and the farmers have to this day many ceremonies to secure their cows and other cattle from witchcraft; but they seem to have been most suspected of malice against swine. Shakespeare has accordingly made one of his witches declare that she has been *killing swine*; and Dr Harsenet observes, that about that time, *a sow could not be ill of the measles, nor a girl of the sullens, but some old woman was charged with witchcraft.*

Toad, that under the cold stone
Days and nights has forty-one

Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the' charmed pot.

Toads have likewise long lain under the reproach of being by some means accessary to witchcraft, for which reason Shakespeare, in the first scene of this play, calls one of the spirits *padocke* or *toad*, and now takes care to put a toad first into the pot. When Vaninus was siezed at Thoulouse, there was found at his lodgings *ingens bufo vitro inclusus, a great toad shut in a vial*, upon which those that prosecuted him *veneficium exprobrabant, charged him*, I suppose, *with witchcraft*.

Fillet of a fenny snake
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of neut, and toe of frog;—
For a charm, &c.

The propriety of these ingredients may be known by consulting the books *de Viribus Animalium* and *de Mirabilibus Mundi*, ascribed to Albertus Magnus, in which the reader, who has time and credulity, may discover very wonderful secrets.

Finger of birth-strangled babe,
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab;—

It has been already mentioned in the law against witches, that they are supposed to take up dead bodies to use in enchantments, which was confessed by the woman whom King James examined, and who had of a dead body, that was divided in one of their assemblies, two fingers for her share. It

is observable that Shakespeare, on this great occasion which involves the fate of a king, multiplies all the circumstances of horror. The babe whose finger is used, must be strangled in its birth, the grease must not only be human, but must have dropped from a gibbet, the gibbet of a murderer, and even the sow whose blood is used must have offended nature by devouring her own farrow. These are touches of judgment and genius.

And now about the cauldron sing———

Blue spirits and white,
Black spirits and grey
Mingle, mingle, mingle,
You that mingle may.

And in a former part,

Weird sisters hand in hand———
Thus do go about, about
Thrice to mine, and thrice to thine,
And thrice again to make up nine.

These two passages I have brought together, because they both seem subject to the objection of too much levity for the solemnity of enchantment, and may both be shown, by one quotation from Camden's account of Ireland, to be founded upon a practice really observed by the uncivilized natives of that country. "When any one gets a fall, *says* "*the informer of* Camden, he starts up, and *turning* "*three times to the right*, digs a hole in the earth; "for they imagine that there is a spirit in the ground; "and if he falls sick in two or three days, they

" send one of their women that is skilled in that " way to the place, where she says, I call thee from " the east, west, north, and south, from the groves, " the woods, the rivers, and the fens, from the " *fairies, red, black, white.*" There was likewise a book written before the time of Shakespeare, describing, amongst other properties, the *colours* of spirits.

Many other circumstances might be particularised, in which Shakespeare has shewn his judgment and his knowledge.

NOTE XXXVI.

SCENE II.

Macbeth. THOU art too like the spirit of Banquo, down,
Thy crown does (1) sear my eye-balls, and thy (2) *hair,*
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first,
A third is like the former.———

(1) The expression of *Macbeth*, that the *crown sears his* eye-balls, is taken from the method formerly practised of destroying the sight of captives or competitors, by holding a burning bason before the eye, which dried up its humidity.

(2) As *Macbeth* expected to see a train of kings, and was only enquiring from what race they would proceed, he could not be surprised that the *hair* of the second was *bound with gold* like that of the first; he was offended only that the second resembled the first, as the first resembled *Banquo*, and therefore said,

——And thy *air*,
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.

NOTE XXXVII.

I WILL—give to the edge o' th' sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That *trace him in his line*—no boasting like a fool,
This deed I'll do before my purpose cool.

Both the sense and measure of the third line, which as it rhymes, ought, according to the practice of this author, to be regular, are at present injured by two superfluous syllables, which may easily be removed by reading

—— souls,
That trace his line—no boasting like a fool.

NOTE XXXVIII.

SCENE III.

Rosse. DEAREST cousin
I pray you school yourself; but for your husband,
He's noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o' th' time, I dare not speak much farther,
But cruel are the times when we are traitors,
And do not know't ourselves: when we (1) *hold rumour*
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,
But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way, and (2) *move*. I'll take my leave of you;

Shall not be long but I'll be here again:
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upwards
To what they were before: my pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you.

(1)————When we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear.

The present reading seems to afford no sense; and therefore some critical experiments may be properly tried upon it, though, the verses being without any connection, there is room for suspicion, that some intermediate lines are lost, and that the passage is therefore irretrievable. If it be supposed that the fault arises only from the corruption of some words, and that the traces of the true reading are still to be found, the passage may be changed thus:

——When we *bode ruin*
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear.

Or in a sense very applicable to the occasion of the conference.

——When the *bold running*
From what they fear, yet know not what they fear.

(2) But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way, and move.

That he who *floats* upon a *rough sea* must *move* is evident, too evident for Shakespeare so emphatically to assert. The line therefore is to be written thus:

Each way, and move—I'll take my leave of you.

Rosse is about to proceed, but finding himself overpowered by his tenderness, breaks off abruptly, for which he makes a short apology and retires.

NOTE XXXIX.

Scene iv.

Malcolm. Let us seek out some dessolate shade, and there
Weep our sad bosoms empty.
Macduff. Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal sword; and like good men,
Bestride our *downfal birth-doom;* each new morn,
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland, and yell'd out
Like syllables of dolour.

He who can discover what is meant by him that earnestly exhorts him to *bestride* his *downfal birth-doom*, is at liberty to adhere to the present text; but those who are willing to confess that such counsel would to them be unintelligible, must endeavour to discover some reading less obscure. It is probable that Shakespeare wrote,

———Like good men,
Bestride our *downfal birthdom*———

The allusion is to a man from whom something valuable is about to be taken by violence, and who

that he may defend it without incumbrance, lays it on the ground, and stands over it with his weapon in his hand. Our birthdom, or birthright, says he, lies on the ground, let us, like men who are to fight for what is dearest to them, not abandon it, but stand over it and defend it. This is a strong picture of obstinate resolution.

Birthdom for *birthright* is formed by the same analogy with *masterdom* in this play, signifying the *privileges* or *rights* of a *master*.

Perhaps it might be *birth-dame* for *mother;* let us stand over our mother that lies bleeding on the ground.

NOTE XL.

Malcolm. Now we'll together, and the *chance of goodness*
Be like our warranted quarrel.

The *chance of goodness*, as it is commonly read, conveys no sense. If there be not some more important error in the passage, it should at least be pointed thus:

And the chance, of goodness,
Be like our warranted quarrel,

That is, May the event be, of the goodness of heaven [*pro justitia divina*] answerable to the cause.

But I am inclined to believe that Shakespeare wrote,

——And the chance, O goodness,
Be like our warranted quarrel.

This some of his transcribers wrote with a small e, which another imagined to mean *of*. If we adopt this reading, the sense will be, *and O thou sovereign goodness, to whom we now appeal, may our fortune answer to our cause,*

NOTE XLI.

Act v. Scene iii.

Macbeth. Bring me no more reports, let them fly all,
'Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane,
I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?
Was he not born of woman?———
———Fly false Thanes,
And mingle with the English epicures.

In the first line of this speech, the proper pauses are not observed in the present editions.

Bring me no more reports—let them fly all—*Tell me not any more of desertions—Let all my subjects leave me—I am safe till,* &c.

The reproach of epicurism, on which Mr Theobald has bestowed a note, is nothing more than a natural invective uttered by an inhabitant of a barren country, against those who have more opportunities of luxury.

NOTE XLII.

Macbeth. I have lived long enough: my *way* of life
Is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf.

As there is no relation between the *way of* life and *fallen into the sear*, I am inclined to think, that the *W* is only an *M* inverted, and that it was originally written, my *May* of life.

I am now passed from the spring to the autumn of my days, but I am without those comforts that should succeed the sprightliness of bloom, and support me in this melancholy season.

NOTE XLIII.

Scene iv.

Malcolm. 'Tis his main hope:
For where there is *advantage to be given*,
Both more or less have given him the revolt;
And none serve with him but constrained things,
Whose hearts are absent too.

The impropriety of the expression *advantage to be given*, instead of *advantage given*, and the disagreeable repetition of the word *given* in the next line, incline me to read,

——Where there is *a vantage* to be *gone*,
Both more and less have given him the revolt.

Advantage or *vantage* in the time of Shakespeare signified *opportunity*.

More and less is the same with *greater and less*. So in the interpolated Mandeville, a book of that age, there is a chapter of *India the more and the less*.

NOTE XLIV.

Scene v.

Macbeth. ——Wherefore was that cry?
Seyton. The queen is dead.
Macbeth. She should (1) have died hereafter?
There would have been a time for such a *word.*
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of (2) recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow.———

She should have died hereafter,
There would have been a time for such a *word.*

This passage has very justly been suspected of being corrupt. It is not apparent for what *word* there would have been a *time;* and that there would or would not be a *time* for any *word,* seems not a consideration of importance sufficient to transport *Macbeth* into the following exclamation. I read therefore,

(1) She should have died hereafter,
There would have been a time for—such a *world!*
To-morrow, &c.

It is a broken speech, in which only part of the thought is expressed, and may be paraphrased thus: *The queen is dead.*—Macbeth. *Her death should have*

been deferred to some more peaceful hour; had she lived longer, there would at length have been a time for *the honours due to her as a queen, and that respect which I owe her for her fidelity and love. Such is the* world—*such is the condition of human life, that we always think* to-morrow *will be happier than to-day; but to-morrow and to-morrow steals over us unenjoyed and unregarded, and we still linger in the same expectation to the moment appointed for our end. All these days, which have thus passed away, have sent multitudes of fools to the grave, who were engrossed by the same dream of future felicity, and, when life was departing from them, were, like me, reckoning on to-morrow.*

(2) To the last syllable of recorded time.

Recorded time seems to signify the time fixed in the decrees of Heaven for the period of life. The *record* of *futurity* is indeed no accurate expression, but as we only know transactions past or present, the language of men affords no term for the volumes of prescience, in which future events may be supposed to be written.

NOTE XLV.

Macbeth. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive
Till famine cling thee: if thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much———
I *pull* in resolution, and begin
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend,
That lies like truth. "Fear not till Birnam wood

Do come to Dunsinane," and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane.

I *pull* in resolution———

Though this is the reading of all the editions, yet as it is a phrase without either example, elegance, or propriety, it is surely better to read

I *pall* in resolution———

I languish in my constancy, my constancy begins to forsake me. It is scarcely necessary to observe how easily *pall* might be changed into pull by a negligent writer, or mistaken for it by an unskilful printer.

NOTE XLVI.

Scene viii.

Seyward. Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so his knell is knoll'd.

This incident is thus related from Henry of Huntingdon by Camden in his Remains, from which our author probably copied it.

When *Seyward*, the martial Earl of Northumberland, understood that his son, whom he had sent in service against the Scotchmen, was slain, he demanded whether his wound were in the fore part or

hinder part of his body. When it was answered in the fore part, he replied, "I am right glad; "neither wish I any other death to me or mine."

AFTER the foregoing papers were printed, the late edition of Shakespeare, ascribed to Sir Thomas Hanmer, fell into my hands; and it was therefore convenient for me to delay the publication of my remarks, till I had examined whether they were not anticipated by similar observations, or precluded by better. I therefore read over this tragedy, but found that the editor's apprehension is of a cast so different from mine, that he appears to find no difficulty in most of those passages which I have represented as unintelligible, and has therefore passed smoothly over them, without any attempt to alter or explain them.

Some of the lines with which I had been perplexed, have been indeed so fortunate as to attract his regard; and it is not without all the satisfaction which it is usual to express on such occasions, that I find an entire agreement between us in substituting [see Note II.] *quarrel* for *quarry*, and in explaining the adage of the *cat*, [Note XVII.] But this pleasure is, like most others, known only to be regretted; for I have the unhappiness to find no such conformity with regard to any other passage.

The line which I have endeavoured to amend, Note XI. is likewise attempted by the new editor,

and is perhaps the only passage in the play in which he has not submissively admitted the emendations of foregoing criticks. Instead of the common reading,

——— Doing every thing
Safe towards your love and honour,

he has published,

——— Doing every thing
Shap'd towards your love and honour.

This alteration, which, like all the rest attempted by him, the reader is expected to admit, without any reason alledged in its defence, is in my opinion, more plausible than that of Mr Theobald; whether it is right, I am not to determine.

In the passage which I have altered in Note XL. an emendation is likewise attempted in the late edition, where, for

— And the chance *of* goodness
Be like our warranted quarrel,

is substituted—And the chance *in* goodness—whether with more or less elegance, dignity, and propriety, than the reading which I have offered, I must again decline the province of deciding.

Most of the other emendations which he has endeavoured, whether with good or bad fortune, are too trivial to deserve mention. For surely the weapons of criticism ought not to be blunted against an editor, who can imagine that he is re-

storing poetry, while he is amusing himself with alterations like these;

For —— *This is the serjeant,*
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought;

—— This is the serjeant, who
Like a *right* good and hardy soldier fought.

For —— Dismay'd not this
Our captains Macbeth and Banquo?—Yes;

—— Dismay'd not this
Our captains *brave* Macbeth and Banquo?—Yes.

Such harmless industry may, surely, be forgiven, if it cannot be praised: may he therefore never want a monosyllable, who can use it with such wonderful dexterity.

Rumpatur quisquis rumpitur invidia!

The rest of this edition I have not read, but, from the little that I have seen, think it not dangerous to declare, that, in my opinion, its pomp recommends it more than its accuracy. There is no distinction made between the ancient reading, and the innovations of the editor; there is no reason given for any of the alterations which are made; the emendations of former criticks are adopted without any acknowledgment, and few of the difficulties are removed which have hitherto embarrassed the readers of Shakespeare.

I would not, however, be thought to insult the editor, nor to censure him with too much petulance, for having failed in little things, of whom I have been told that he excels in greater. But I may without indecency observe, that no man should attempt to teach others what he has never learned himself; and that those who, like Themistocles, have studied the arts of policy, and *can teach a small state how to grow great*, should, like him, disdain to labour in trifles, and consider petty accomplishments as below their ambition.

THE

HISTORY OF RASSELAS,

PRINCE OF ABISSINIA.

CHAP. I.

DESCRIPTION OF A PALACE IN A VALLEY.

YE who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be supplied by the morrow; attend to the history of Rasselas Prince of Abissinia.

Rasselas was the fourth son of the mighty emperor, in whose dominions the Father of Waters begins his course; whose bounty pours down the streams of plenty, and scatters over half the world the harvests of Egypt.

According to the custom which has descended from age to age among the monarchs of the torrid zone, Rasselas was confined in a private palace, with the other sons and daughters of Abissinian royalty, till the order of succession should call him to the throne.

The place, which the wisdom or policy of antiquity had destined for the residence of the Abissinian princes, was a spacious valley in the kingdom of Amhara, surrounded on every side by mountains, of which the summits overhang the middle part. The only passage, by which it could be entered, was a cavern that passed under a rock, of which it has long been disputed whether it was the work of nature or of human industry. The outlet of the cavern was concealed by thick wood, and the mouth, which opened into the valley, was closed with gates of iron, forged by the atificers of ancient days, so massy, that no man could without the help of engines open or shut them.

From the mountains on every side, rivulets descended that filled all the valley with verdure and fertility, and formed a lake in the middle inhabited by fish of every species, and frequented by every fowl whom nature has taught to dip the wing in water. This lake discharged its superfluities by a stream which entered a dark cleft of the mountain on the northern side, and fell with dreadful noise from precipice to precipice till it was heard no more.

The sides of the mountains were covered with trees, the banks of the brooks were diversified with flowers; every blast shook spices from the rocks, and every month dropped fruits upon the ground. All animals that bite the grass, or browse the shrub, whether wild or tame, wandered in this extensive circuit, secured from beasts of prey by the mountains which confined them. On one part were flocks and herds feeding in the pastures, on another all the beasts of chace frisking in the

lawns; the sprightly kid was bonnding on the rocks, the subtle monkey frolicking in the trees, and the solemn elephant reposing in the shade. All the diversities of the world were brought together, the blessings of nature were collected, and its evils extracted and excluded.

The valley, wide and fruitful, supplied its inhabitants with the necessaries of life; and all delights and superfluities were added at the annual visit which the emperor paid his children, when the iron gate was opened to the sound of musick; and during eight days every one that resided in the valley was required to propose whatever might contribute to make seclusion pleasant, to fill up the vacancies of attention, and lessen the tediousness of time. Every desire was immediately granted. All the artificers of pleasure were called to gladden the festivity; the musicians exerted the power of harmony, and the dancers shewed their activity before the princes, in hope that they should pass their lives in this blissful captivity, to which those only were admitted whose performance was thought able to add novelty to luxury. Such was the appearance of security and delight which this retirement afforded, that they, to whom it was new, always desired that it might be perpetual; and as those, on whom the iron gate had once closed, were never suffered to return, the effect of longer experience could not be known. Thus every year produced new schemes of delight, and new competitors for imprisonment.

The palace stood on an eminence raised about thirty paces above the surface of the lake. It was divided into many squares or courts, built with

greater or less magnificence, according to the rank of those for whom they were designed. The roofs were turned into arches of massy stone, joined by a cement that grew harder by time, and the building stood from century to century deriding the solstitial rains and equinoctial hurricanes, without need of reparation.

This house, which was so large as to be fully known to none but some ancient officers who successively inherited the secrets of the place, was built as if suspicion herself had dictated the plan. To every room there was an open and secret passage, every square had a communication with the rest, either from the upper stories by private galleries, or by subterranean passages from the lower apartments. Many of the columns had unsuspected cavities, in which a long race of monarchs had reposited their treasures. They then closed up the opening with marble, which was never to be removed but in the utmost exigencies of the kingdom; and recorded their accumulations in a book, which was itself concealed in a tower not entered but by the emperor, attended by the prince who stood next in succession.

CHAP. II.

THE DISCONTENT OF RASSELAS IN THE HAPPY VALLEY.

HERE the sons and daughters of Abissinia lived only to know the soft vicissitudes of pleasure and repose, attended by all that were skilful to de-

light, and gratified with whatever the senses can enjoy. They wandered in gardens of fragrance, and slept in the fortresses of security. Every art was practised to make them pleased with their own condition. The sages who instructed them, told them of nothing but the miseries of public life, and described all beyond the mountains as regions of calamity, where discord was always raging, and where man preyed upon man.

To heighten their opinion of their own felicity, they were daily entertained with songs, the subject of which was the *Happy Valley*. Their appetites were excited by frequent enumerations of different enjoyments, and revelry and merriment was the business of every hour from the dawn of morning to the close of even.

These methods were generally successful; few of the princes had ever wished to enlarge their bounds, but passed their lives in full conviction that they had all within their reach that art or nature could bestow, and pitied those whom fate had excluded from this seat of tranquillity, as the sport of chance and the slaves of misery.

Thus they rose in the morning and lay down at night, pleased with each other and with themselves, all but Rasselas, who in the twenty-sixth year of his age began to withdraw himself from their pastimes and assemblies, and to delight in solitary walks and silent meditation. He often sat before tables covered with luxury, and forgot to taste the dainties that were placed before him: he rose abruptly in the midst of the song, and hastily retired beyond the sound of musick. His attendants observed the change, and endeavoured to renew his

love of pleasure: he neglected their officiousness, repulsed their invitations, and spent day after day on the banks of rivulets sheltered with trees, where he sometimes listened to the birds in the branches, sometimes observed the fish playing in the stream, and anon cast his eyes upon the pastures and mountains filled with animals, of which some were biting the herbage, and some sleeping among the bushes.

This singularity of his humour made him much observed. One of the sages, in whose conversation he had formerly delighted, followed him secretly, in hope of discovering the cause of his disquiet. Rasselas, who knew not that any one was near him, having for some time fixed his eyes upon the goats that were browsing among the rocks, began to compare their condition with his own.

"What," said he, "makes the difference between man and all the rest of the animal creation? Every beast that strays beside me has the same corporeal necessities with myself; he is hungry and crops the grass, he is thirsty and drinks the stream, his thirst and hunger are appeased, he is satisfied and sleeps; he rises again and is hungry, he is again fed and is at rest. I am hungry and thirsty like him, but when thirst and hunger cease I am not at rest; I am, like him, pained with want, but am not, like him, satisfied with fulness. The intermediate hours are tedious and gloomy; I long again to be hungry that I may again quicken my attention. The birds peck the berries or the corn, and fly away to the groves, where they sit in seeming happiness on the branches, and waste their lives in tuning one unvaried series of sounds.

I likewise can call the lutanist and the singer, but the sounds that pleased me yesterday weary me to-day, and will grow yet more wearisome to-morrow. I can discover within me no power of perception which is not glutted with its proper pleasure, yet I do not feel myself delighted. Man surely has some latent sense for which this place affords no gratification, or he has some desires distinct from sense, which must be satisfied before he can be happy."

After this he lifted up his head, and seeing the moon rising, walked towards the palace. As he passed through the fields, and saw the animals around him, "Ye," said he, "are happy, and need not envy me that walk thus among you, burdened with myself; nor do I, ye gentle beings, envy your felicity; for it is not the felicity of man. I have many distresses from which ye are free; I fear pain when I do not feel it; I sometimes shrink at evils recollected, and sometimes start at evils anticipated: surely the equity of Providence has balanced peculiar sufferings with peculiar enjoyments."

With observations like these the prince amused himself as he returned, uttering them with a plaintive voice, yet with a look that discovered him to feel some complacence in his own perspicacity, and to receive some solace of the miseries of life, from consciousness of the delicacy with which he felt, and the eloquence with which he bewailed them. He mingled cheerfully in the diversions of the evening, and all rejoiced to find that his heart was lightened.

CHAP. III.

THE WANTS OF HIM THAT WANTS NOTHING.

ON the next day his old instructor, imagining that he had now made himself acquainted with his disease of mind, was in hope of curing it by counsel, and officiously sought an opportunity of conference, which the prince, having long considered him as one whose intellects were exhausted, was not very willing to afford: "Why," said he, "does this man thus intrude upon me; shall I be never suffered to forget those lectures which pleased only while they were new, and to become new again must be forgotten?" He then walked into the wood, and composed himself to his usual meditations; when, before his thoughts had taken any settled form, he perceived his pursuer at his side, and was at first prompted by his impatience to go hastily away; but, being unwilling to offend a man whom he had once reverenced and still loved, he invited him to sit down with him on the bank.

The old man, thus encouraged, began to lament the change which had been lately observed in the prince, and to inquire why he so often retired from the pleasures of the palace, to loneliness and silence. "I fly from pleasure," said the prince, "because pleasure has ceased to please; I am lonely because I am miserable, and am unwilling to cloud with my presence the happiness of others." "You, Sir," said the sage, "are the first who has complained of misery in the *Happy Valley*. I hope

to convince you that your complaints have no real cause. You are here in full possession of all that the emperor of Abissinia can bestow; here is neither labour to be endured nor danger to be dreaded, yet here is all that labour or danger can procure or purchase. Look round and tell me which of your wants is without supply: if you want nothing, how are you unhappy?"

"That I want nothing," said the prince, "or that I know not what I want, is the cause of my complaint; if I had any known want, I should have a certain wish; that wish would excite endeavour, and I should not then repine to see the sun move so slowly towards the western mountain, or lament when the day breaks and sleep will no longer hide me from myself. When I see the kids and the lambs chasing one another, I fancy that I should be happy if I had something to pursue. But, possessing all that I can want, I find one day and one hour exactly like another, except that the latter is still more tedious than the former. Let your experience inform me how the day may now seem as short as in my childhood, while nature was yet fresh, and every moment shewed me what I never had observed before. I have already enjoyed too much; give me something to desire."

The old man was surprised at this new species of affliction, and knew not what to reply, yet was unwilling to be silent. "Sir," said he, "if you had seen the miseries of the world, you would know how to value your present state."—"Now," said the prince, "you have given me something to desire; I shall long to see the miseries of the world, since the sight of them is necessary to happiness."

CHAP. IV.

THE PRINCE CONTINUES TO GRIEVE AND MUSE.

AT this time the sound of musick proclaimed the hour of repast, and the conversation was concluded. The old man went away sufficiently discontented, to find that his reasonings had produced the only conclusion which they were intended to prevent. But in the decline of life shame and grief are of short duration; whether it be that we bear easily what we have borne long, or that, finding ourselves in age less regarded, we less regard others; or, that we look with slight regard upon afflictions, to which we know that the hand of death is about to put an end.

The prince, whose views were extended to a wider space, could not speedily quiet his emotions. He had been before terrified at the length of life which nature promised him, because he considered that in a long time much must be endured; he now rejoiced in his youth, because in many years much might be done.

This first beam of hope, that had been ever darted into his mind, rekindled youth in his cheeks, and doubled the lustre of his eyes. He was fired with the desire of doing something, though he knew not yet with distinctness, either end or means.

He was now no longer gloomy and unsocial; but, considering himself as master of a secret stock of happiness, which he could enjoy only by con-

cealing it, he affected to be busy in all schemes of diversion, and endeavoured to make others pleased with the state of which he himself was weary. But pleasures never can be so multiplied or continued, as not to leave much of life unemployed; there were many hours, both of the night and day, which he could spend without suspicion in solitary thought. The load of life was much lightened: he went eagerly into the assemblies, because he supposed the frequency of his presence necessary to the success of his purposes; he retired gladly to privacy, because he had now a subject of thought.

His chief amusement was to picture to himself that world which he had never seen; to place himself in various conditions; to be entangled in imaginary difficulties, and to be engaged in wild adventures: but his benevolence always terminated his projects in the relief of distress, the detection of fraud, the defeat of oppression, and the diffusion of happiness.

Thus passed twenty months of the life of Rasselas. He busied himself so intensely in visionary bustle, that he forgot his real solitude, and, amidst hourly preparations for the various incidents of human affairs, neglected to consider by what means he should mingle with mankind.

One day, as he was sitting on a bank, he feigned to himself an orphan virgin robbed of her little portion by a treacherous lover, and crying after him for restitution and redress. So strongly was the image impressed upon his mind, that he started up in the maid's defence, and ran forward to seize the plunderer with all the eagerness of real pursuit. Fear naturally quickens the flight of guilt. Rasse-

las could not catch the fugitive with his utmost efforts; but, resolving to weary by perseverance him whom he could not surpass in speed, he pressed on till the foot of the mountain stopped his course.

Here he recollected himself, and smiled at his own useless impetuosity. Then raising his eyes to the mountain, "This," said he, "is the fatal obtacle that hinders at once the enjoyment of pleasure, and the exercise of virtue. How long is it that my hopes and wishes have flown beyond this boundary of my life, which yet I never have attempted to surmount!"

Struck with this reflection, he sat down to muse; and remembered, that since he first resolved to escape from his confinement, the sun had passed twice over him in his annual course. He now felt a degree of regret with which he had never been before acquainted. He considered how much might have been done in the time which had passed, and left nothing real behind it. He compared twenty months with the life of man. "In life," said he, "is not to be counted the ignorance of infancy, or imbecility of age. We are long before we are able to think, and we soon cease from the power of acting. The true period of human existence may be reasonably estimated at forty years, of which I have mused away the four-and-twentieth part. What I have lost was certain, for I have certainly possessed it; but of twenty months to come who can assure me?"

The consciousness of his own folly pierced him deeply, and he was long before he could be reconciled to himself. "The rest of my time," said he, "has been lost by the crime or folly of my ancestors,

and the absurd institutions of my country; I remember it with disgust, yet without remorse: but the months that have passed since new light darted into my soul, since I formed a scheme of reasonable felicity, have been squandered by my own fault. I have lost that which can never be restored: I have seen the sun rise and set for twenty months, an idle gazer on the light of heaven: In this time the birds have left the nest of their mother, and committed themselves to the woods and to the skies: the kid has forsaken the teat, and learned by degrees to climb the rocks in quest of independent sustenance. I only have made no advances, but am still helpless and ignorant. The moon, by more than twenty changes, admonished me of the flux of life; the stream that rolled before my feet upbraided my inactivity. I sat feasting on intellectual luxury, regardless alike of the examples of the earth, and the instructions of the planets. Twenty months are passed, who shall restore them?",

These sorrowful meditations fastened upon his mind; he passed four months in resolving to lose no more time in idle resolves, and was awakened to more vigorous exertion, by hearing a maid, who had broken a porcelain cup, remark, that what cannot be repaired is not to be regretted.

This was obvious; and Rasselas reproached himself that he had not discovered it, having not known or not considered, how many useful hints are obtained by chance, and how often the mind, hurried by her own ardour to distant views, neglects the truths that lie open before her. He for a few hours, regretted his regret, and from that time bent

his whole mind upon the means of escaping from the Valley of Happiness.

CHAP. V.

THE PRINCE MEDITATES HIS ESCAPE.

HE now found that it would be very difficult to effect that which it was very easy to suppose effected. When he looked round about him, he saw himself confined by the bars of nature which had never yet been broken, and by the gate, through which none that once had passed it were ever able to return. He was now impatient as an eagle in a grate. He passed week after week in clambering the mountains, to see if there was any aperture which the bushes might conceal, but found all the summits inaccessible by their prominence. The iron gate he despaired to open; for it was not only secured with all the power of art, but was always watched by successive sentinels, and was by its position exposed to the perpetual observation of all the inhabitants.

He then examined the cavern through which the waters of the lake were discharged; and, looking down at a time when the sun shone strongly upon its mouth, he discovered it to be full of broken rocks, which, though they permitted the stream to flow through many narrow passages, would stop any body of solid bulk. He returned discouraged and dejected; but, having now known the blessing of hope, resolved never to despair.

In these fruitless researches he spent ten months. The time, however, passed cheerfully away: in the morning he rose with new hope, in the evening applauded his own diligence, and in the night slept sound after his fatigue. He met a thousand amusements which beguiled his labour, and diversified his thoughts. He discerned the various instincts of animals, and properties of plants, and found the place replete with wonders, of which he purposed to solace himself with the contemplation, if he should never be able to accomplish his flight; rejoicing that his endeavours, though yet unsuccessful, had supplied him with a source of inexhaustible inquiry.

But his original curiosity was not yet abated; he resolved to obtain some knowledge of the ways of men. His wish still continued, but his hope grew less. He ceased to survey any longer the walls of his prison, and spared to search by new toils for interstices which he knew could not be found, yet determined to keep his design always in view, and lay hold on any expedient that time should offer.

CHAP. VI.

A DISSERTATION ON THE ART OF FLYING.

AMONG the artists that had been allured into the Happy Valley, to labour for the accommodation and pleasure of its inhabitants, was a man eminent for his knowledge of the mechanick powers, who

had contrived many engines both of use and recreation. By a wheel, which the stream turned, he forced the water into a tower, whence it was distributed to all the apartments of the palace. He erected a pavilion in the garden, around which he kept the air always cool by artificial showers. One of the groves, appropriated to the ladies, was ventilated by fans, to which the rivulets that ran through it gave a constant motion; and instruments of soft musick were placed at proper distances, of which some played by the impulse of the wind, and some by the power of the stream.

This artist was sometimes visited by Rasselas, who was pleased with every kind of knowledge, imagining that the time would come when all his acquisitions should be of use to him in the open world. He came one day to amuse himself in his usual manner, and found the master busy in building a sailing chariot: he saw that the design was practicable upon a level surface, and with expressions of great esteem solicited its completion. The workman was pleased to find himself so much regarded by the prince, and resolved to gain yet higher honours. "Sir," said he, "you have seen but a small part of what the mechanick sciences can perform. I have been long of opinion, that instead of the tardy conveyance of ships and chariots, man might use the swifter migration of wings; that the fields of air are open to knowledge, and that only ignorance and idleness need crawl upon the ground."

This hint rekindled the prince's desire of passing the mountains. Having seen what the mechanist had *already* performed, he was willing to fancy that he *could do* more; yet resolved to inquire further,

before he suffered hope to afflict him by disappointment. "I am afraid," said he to the artist, "that your imagination prevails over your skill, and that you now tell me rather what you wish, than what you know. Every animal has his element assigned him; the birds have the air, and man and beasts the earth." "So," replied the mechanist, "fishes have the water, in which yet beasts can swim by nature, and men by art. He that can swim needs not despair to fly: to swim is to fly in a grosser fluid, and to fly is to swim in a subtler. We are only to proportion our power of resistance to the different density of matter through which we are to pass. You will be necessarily upborn by the air, if you can renew any impulse upon it, faster than the air can recede from the pressure."

"But the exercise of swimming," said the prince, "is very laborious; the strongest limbs are soon wearied; I am afraid the act of flying will be yet more violent, and wings will be of no great use, unless we can fly further than we can swim."

"The labour of rising from the ground," said the artist, "will be great, as we see it in the heavier domestic fowls, but as we mount higher, the earth's attraction, and the body's gravity, will be gradually diminished, till we shall arrive at a region where the man will float in the air without any tendency to fall: no care will then be necessary but to move forwards, which the gentlest impulse will effect. You, Sir, whose curiosity is so extensive, will easily conceive with what pleasure a philosopher, furnished with wings, and hovering in the sky, would see the earth, and all its inhabitants, rolling beneath him, and presenting to him successively

by its diurnal motion, all the countries within the same parallel. How must it amuse the pendant spectator to see the moving scene of land and ocean, cities and deserts! To survey with equal security the marts of trade, and the fields of battle; mountains infested by barbarians, and fruitful regions, gladdened by plenty, and lulled by peace! How easily shall we then trace the Nile through all his passage; pass over to distant regions, and examine the face of nature from one extremity of the earth to the other!"

"All this," said the prince, "is much to be desired; but I am afraid that no man will be able to breathe in these regions of speculation and tranquillity I have been told, that respiration is difficult upon lofty mountains, yet from these precipices, though so high as to produce great tenuity of air, it is very easy to fall: therefore I suspect, that from any height, where life can be supported, there may be danger of too quick descent."

"Nothing," replied the artist, "will ever be attempted, if all possible objections must be first overcome. If you will favour my project, I will try the first flight at my own hazard. I have considered the structure of all volant animals, and find the folding continuity of the bat's wings most easily accommodated to the human form. Upon this model I shall begin my task to-morrow, and in a year expect to tower into the air beyond the malice and pursuit of man. But I will work only on this condition, that the art shall not be divulged, and that you shall not require me to make wings for any but ourselves."

"Why," said Rasselas, "should you envy others so great an advantage? All skill ought to be exerted for universal good; every man has owed much to others, and ought to repay the kindness that he has received."

"If men were all virtuous," returned the artist, "I should with great alacrity teach them all to fly. But what would be the security of the good, if the bad could at pleasure invade them from the sky? Against an army sailing through the clouds, neither walls, nor mountains, nor seas, could afford any security. A flight of northern savages might hover in the wind, and light at once with irresistible violence upon the capital of a fruitful region that was rolling under them. Even this valley, the retreat of princes, the abode of happiness, might be violated by the sudden descent of some of the naked nations that swarm on the coast of the southern sea."

The prince promised secrecy, and waited for the performance, not wholly hopeless of success. He visited the work from time to time, observed its progress, and remarked many ingenious contrivances to facilitate motion, and unite levity with strength. The artist was every day more certain that he should leave vultures and eagles behind him, and the contagion of his confidence siezed upon the prince.

In a year the wings were finished, and on a morning appointed, the maker appeared furnished for flight on a little promontory: he waved his pinions a while to gather air, then leaped from his stand, and in an instant dropped into the lake. His wings which were of no use in the air, sustained

him in the water, and the prince drew him to land, half dead with terror and vexation.

CHAP. VII.

THE PRINCE FINDS A MAN OF LEARNING.

THE prince was not much afflicted by this disaster, having suffered himself to hope for a happier event, only because he had no other means of escape in view. He still persisted in his design to leave the Happy Valley by the first opportunity.

His imagination was now at a stand; he had no prospect of entering into the world; and, notwithstanding all his endeavours to support himself, discontent by degrees preyed upon him, and he began again to lose his thoughts in sadness, when the rainy season, which in these countries is periodical, made it inconvenient to wander in the woods.

The rain continued longer and with more violence than had been ever known: the clouds broke on the surrounding mountains, and the torrents streamed into the plain on every side, till the cavern was too narrow to discharge the water. The lake overflowed its banks, and all the level of the valley was covered with the inundation. The eminence, on which the palace was built, and some other spots of rising ground, were all that the eye could now discover. The herds and flocks left the pastures, and both the wild beasts and the tame retreated to the mountains.

This inundation confined all the princes to domestick amusements, and the attention of Rasselas was particularly seized by a poem, which Imlac rehearsed, upon the various conditions of humanity. He commanded the poet to attend him in his apartment, and recite his verses a second time; then entering into familiar talk, he thought himself happy in having found a man who knew the world so well, and could so skilfully paint the scenes of life. He asked a thousand questions about things, to which, though common to all other mortals, his confinement from childhood had kept him a stranger. The poet pitied his ignorance, and loved his curiosity, and entertained him from day to day with novelty and instruction, so that the prince regretted the necessity of sleep, and longed till the morning should renew his pleasure.

As they were sitting together, the prince commanded Imlac to relate his history, and to tell by what accident he was forced, or by what motive induced to close his life in the Happy Valley. As he was going to begin his narrative, Rasselas was called to a concert, and obliged to restrain his curiosity till the evening.

CHAP. VIII.

THE HISTORY OF IMLAC.

THE close of the day is in the regions of the torrid zone, the only season of diversion and entertainment, and it was therefore midnight before the musick ceased, and the princesses retired. Ras-

selas then called for his companion, and required him to begin the story of his life.

"Sir," said Imlac, "my history will not belong: the life that is devoted to knowledge passes silently away, and is very little diversified by events. To talk in publick, to think in solitude, to read and to hear, to inquire, and answer inquiries, is the business of a scholar. He wanders about the world without pomp or terror, and is neither known nor valued but by men like himself.

"I was born in the kingdom of Goiama, at no great distance from the fountain of the Nile. My father was a wealthy merchant, who traded between the inland countries of Africk and the ports of the Red Sea. He was honest, frugal, and diligent, but of mean sentiments, and narrow comprehension: he desired only to be rich, and to conceal his riches, lest he should be spoiled by the governors of the province."

"Surely," said the prince, "my father must be negligent of his charge if any man in his dominions dares take that which belongs to another. Does he not know that kings are accountable for injustice permitted as well as done? If I were emperor, not the meanest of my subjects should be oppressed with impunity. My blood boils when I am told that a merchant durst not enjoy his honest gains for fear of losing them by the rapacity of power. Name the governor who robbed the people, that I may declare his crimes to the emperor."

"Sir," said Imlac, "your ardour is the natural effect of virtue animated by youth: the time will come when you will acquit your father, and per-

haps hear with less impatience of the governor. Oppression is in the Abissinian dominions neither frequent nor tolerated; but no form of government has been yet discovered, by which cruelty can be wholly prevented. Subordination supposes power on one part, and subjection on the other; and if power be in the hands of men, it will sometimes be abused. The vigilance of the supreme magistrate may do much, but much will still remain undone. He can never know all the crimes that are committed, and can seldom punish all that he knows."

"This," said the prince, "I do not understand, but I had rather hear thee than dispute. Continue thy narration."

"My father," proceeded Imlac, "originally intended that I should have no other education, than such as might qualify me for commerce; and discovering in me great strength of memory, and quickness of apprehension, often declared his hope that I should be some time the richest man in Abissinia."

"Why," said the prince, "did thy father desire the increase of his wealth, when it was already greater than he durst discover or enjoy? I am unwilling to doubt thy veracity, yet inconsistencies cannot both be true."

"Inconsistencies," answered Imlac, "cannot both be right, but, imputed to man, they may both be true. Yet diversity is not inconsistency. My father might expect a time of greater security. However, some desire is necessary to keep life in motion, and he, whose real wants are supplied, must admit those of fancy."

"This," said the prince, "I can in some measure conceive. I repent that I interrrupted thee."

"With this hope," proceeded Imlac, "he sent me to school; but when I had once found the delight of knowledge, and felt the pleasure of intelligence and the pride of invention, I began silently to despise riches, and determined to disappoint the purpose of my father, whose grossness of conception raised my pity. I was twenty years old before his tenderness would expose me to the fatigue of travel, in which time I had been instructed, by successive masters, in all the literature of my native country. As every hour taught me something new, I lived in a continual course of gratification; but as I advanced towards manhood, I lost much of the reverence with which I had been used to look on my instructors; because, when the lesson was ended, I did not find them wiser or better than common men.

"At length my father resolved to initiate me in commerce, and opening one of his subterranean treasuries, counted out ten thousand pieces of gold. 'This, young man,' said he, 'is the stock with which you must negociate. I began with less than the fifth part, and you see how diligence and parsimony have increased it. This is your own, to waste or to improve. If you squander it by negligence or caprice, you must wait for my death before you will be rich: if, in four years, you double your stock, we will thenceforward let subordination cease, and live together as friends and partners; for he shall always be equal with me, who is equally skilled in the art of growing rich.'

"We laid our money upon camels, concealed in bales of cheap goods, and travelled to the shore of the Red Sea. When I cast my eye on the expanse of waters, my heart bounded like that of a prisoner escaped. I felt an unextinguishable curiosity kindle in my mind, and resolved to snatch this opportunity of seeing the manners of other nations, and of learning sciences unknown in Abissinia.

"I remembered that my father had obliged me to the improvement of my stock, not by a promise which I ought not to violate, but by a penalty which I was at liberty to incur; and therefore determined to gratify my predominant desire, and by drinking at the fountains of knowledge, to quench the thirst of curiosity.

"As I was supposed to trade without connection with my father, it was easy for me to become acquainted with the master of a ship, and procure a passage to some other country. I had no motives of choice to regulate my voyage; it was sufficient for me that wherever I wandered, I should see a country which I had not seen before. I therefore entered a ship bound for Surat, having left a letter for my father declaring my intention.

CHAP. IX.

THE HISTORY OF IMLAC CONTINUED.

"WHEN I first entered upon the world of waters, and lost sight of land, I looked round about me with pleasing terror, and thinking my

soul enlarged by the boundless prospect, imagined that I could gaze round for ever without satiety; but, in a short time, I grew weary of looking on barren uniformity, when I could only see again what I had already seen. I then descended into the ship, and doubted for a while whether all my future pleasures would not end like this, in disgust and disappointment. Yet, surely, said I, the ocean and the land are very different; the only variety of water is rest and motion, but the earth has mountains and vallies, deserts and cities: it is inhabited by men of different customs and contrary opinions; and I may hope to find variety in life, though I should miss it in nature.

"With this thought I quieted my mind, and amused myself during the voyage, sometimes by learning from the sailors the art of navigation, which I have never practised, and sometimes by forming schemes for my conduct in different situations, in not one of which I have been ever placed.

"I was almost weary of my naval amusements when we landed safely at Surat. I secured my money, and purchasing some commodities for show, joined myself to a caravan that was passing into the inland country. My companions, for some reason or other, conjecturing that I was rich, and, by my inquiries and admiration, finding that I was ignorant, considered me as a novice whom they had a right to cheat, and who was to learn, at the usual expence, the art of fraud. They exposed me to the theft of servants, and the exaction of officers, and saw me plundered upon false pretences, without any advantage to themselves, but

that of rejoicing in the superiority of their own knowledge."

"Stop a moment," said the prince, "Is there such depravity in man, as that he should injure another without benefit to himself? I can easily conceive that all are pleased with superiority; but your ignorance was merely accidental, which being neither your crime nor your folly, could afford them no reason to applaud themselves; and the knowledge which they had, and which you wanted, they might as effectually have shewn by warning, as betraying you."

"Pride," said Imlac, "is seldom delicate; it will please itself with very mean advantages; and envy feels not its own happiness, but when it may be compared with the misery of others. They were my enemies, because they grieved to think me rich; and my oppressors, because they delighted to find me weak."

"Proceed," said the prince: "I doubt not of the facts which you relate, but imagine that you impute them to mistaken motives."

"In this company," said Imlac, "I arrived at Agra, the capital of Indostan, the city in which the great Mogul commonly resides. I applied myself to the language of the country, and in a few months was able to converse with the learned men; some of whom I found morose and reserved, and others easy and communicative; some were unwilling to teach another what they had with difficulty learned themselves; and some shewed that the end of their studies was to gain the dignity of instructing.

"To the tutor of the young princes I recom-

mended myself so much, that I was presented to the emperor as a man of uncommon knowledge. The emperor asked me many questions concerning my country and my travels; and though I cannot now recollect any thing that he uttered above the power of a common man, he dismissed me astonished at his wisdom, and enamoured of his goodness.

"My credit was now so high, that the merchants with whom I had travelled, applied to me for recommendations to the ladies of the Court. I was surprised at their confidence of solicitation, and gently reproached them with their practices on the road. They heard me with cold indifference, and shewed no tokens of shame or sorrow.

"They then urged their request with the offer of a bribe; but what I would not do for kindness, I would not do for money; and refused them, not because they had injured me, but because I would not enable them to injure others; for I knew they would have made use of my credit to cheat those who should buy their wares.

"Having resided at Agra till there was no more to be learned, I travelled into Persia, where I saw many remains of ancient magnificence, and observed many new accommodations of life. The Persians are a nation eminently social, and their assemblies afforded me daily opportunities of remarking characters and manners, and of tracing human nature through all its variations.

"From Persia I passed into Arabia, where I saw a nation at once pastoral and warlike; who live without any settled habitation; whose only wealth is their flocks and herds: and who have

yet carried on, through all ages, an hereditary war with all mankind, though they neither covet nor envy their possessions."

CHAP. X.

IMLAC'S HISTORY CONTINUED. A DISSERTATION UPON POETRY.

"WHEREVER I went, I found that poetry was considered as the highest learning, and regarded with a veneration somewhat approaching to that which man would pay to the angelick nature. And yet it fills me with wonder, that, in almost all countries, the most ancient poets are considered as the best: whether it be that every other kind of knowledge is an acquisition gradually attained, and poetry is a gift conferred at once; or that the first poetry of every nation surprised them as a novelty, and retained the credit by consent which it received by accident at first: or whether, as the province of poetry is to describe Nature and Passion, which are always the same, the first writers took possession of the most striking objects for description, and the most probable occurrences for fiction, and left nothing to those that followed them, but transcription of the same events, and new combinations of the same images. Whatever be the reason, it is commonly observed that the early writers are in possession of nature, and their followers of art: that the first excel in

strength and invention, and the latter in elegance and refinement.

"I was desirous to add my name to this illustrious fraternity. I read all the poets of Persia and Arabia, and was able to repeat by memory the volumes that are suspended in the mosque of Mecca. But I soon found that no man was ever great by imitation. My desire of excellence impelled me to transfer my attention to nature and to life. Nature was to be my subject, and men to be my auditors: I could never describe what I had not seen: I could not hope to move those with delight or terror, whose interests and opinions I did not understand.

"Being now resolved to be a poet, I saw every thing with a new purpose; my sphere of attention was suddenly magnified; no kind of knowledge was to be overlooked. I ranged mountains and deserts for images and resemblances, and pictured upon my mind every tree of the forest and flower of the valley. I observed with equal care the crags of the rock and the pinnacles of the palace. Sometimes I wandered along the mazes of the rivulet, and sometimes watched the changes of the summer clouds. To a poet nothing can be useless. Whatever is beautiful, and whatever is dreadful, must be familiar to his imagination: he must be conversant with all that is awfully vast or elegantly little. The plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, and meteors of the sky, must all concur to store his mind with inexhaustible variety: for every idea is useful for the enforcement or decoration of moral or religious truth; and he, who knows most, will

have most power of diversifying his scenes, and of gratifying his reader with remote allusions and unexpected instruction.

"All the appearances of nature I was therefore careful to study, and every country which I have surveyed, has contributed something to my poetical powers."

"In so wide a survey," said the prince, "you must surely have left much unobserved. I have lived till now, within the circuit of these mountains, and yet cannot walk abroad without the sight of something which I had never beheld before, or never heeded."

"The business of a poet," said Imlac, "is to examine, not the individual, but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances; he does not number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest. He is to exhibit in his portraits of nature such prominent and striking features as recal the original to every mind; and must neglect the minuter descriminations, which one may have remarked, and another have neglected, for those characteristicks which are alike obvious to vigilance and carelessness.

"But the knowledge of nature is only half the task of a poet; he must be acquainted likewise with all the modes of life. His character requires that he estimate the happiness and misery of every condition; observe the power of all the passions in all their combinations, and trace the changes of the human mind as they are modified by various institutions, and accidental influences, of climate or custom, from the sprightliness of infancy to the

despondence of decrepitude. He must divest himself of the prejudices of his age and country; he must consider right and wrong in their abstracted and invariable state; he must disregard present laws and opinions, and rise to general and transcendental truths, which will always be the same; he must therefore content himself with the slow progress of his name; contemn the applause of his own time, and commit his claims to the justice of posterity. He must write as the interpreter of nature, and the legislator of mankind, and consider himself as presiding over the thoughts and manners of future generations; as a being superior to time and place.

"His labour is not yet at an end: he must know many languages and many sciences; and, that his style may be worthy of his thoughts, must, by incessant practice, familiarize to himself every delicacy of speech and grace of harmony."

CHAP. XI.

IMLAC'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED. A HINT ON PILGRIMAGE.

IMLAC now felt the enthusiastic fit, and was proceeding to aggrandize his own profession, when the prince cried out, "Enough! thou hast convinced me, that no human being can ever be a poet. Proceed with thy narration."

"To be a poet," said Imlac, "is indeed very difficult." "So difficult," returned the prince, "that I will at present hear no more of his la-

bours. Tell me whether you went when you had seen Persia."

"From Persia," said the poet, "I travelled through Syria, and for three years resided in Palestine, where I conversed with great numbers of the northern and western nations of Europe; the nations which are now in possession of all power and all knowledge; whose armies are irresistible, and whose fleets command the remotest parts of the globe. When I compared these men with the natives of our own kingdom, and those that surround us, they appeared almost another order of beings. In their countries it is difficult to wish for any thing that may not be obtained: a thousand arts, of which we never heard, are continually labouring for their convenience and pleasure; and whatever their own climate has denied them is supplied by their commerce."

"By what means," said the prince, "are the Europeans thus powerful, or why, since they can so easily visit Asia and Africa for trade or conquest, cannot the Asiaticks and Africans invade their coasts, plant colonies in their ports, and give laws to their natural princes? The same wind that carries them back would bring us thither."

"They are more powerful, Sir, than we," answered Imlac, "because they are wiser; knowledge will always predominate over ignorance, as man governs the other animals. But why their knowledge is more than ours, I know not what reason can be given, but the unsearchable will of the Supreme Being."

"When," said the prince with a sigh, "shall I be able to visit Palestine, and mingle with this mighty

confluence of nations? Till that happy moment shall arrive, let me fill up the time with such representations as thou canst give me. I am not ignorant of the motive that assembles such numbers in that place, and cannot but consider it as the centre of wisdom and piety, to which the best and wisest men of every land must be continually resorting."

"There are some nations" said Imlac "that send few visitants to Palestine: for many numerous and learned sects in Europe concur to censure pilgrimage as superstitious, or deride it as ridiculous."

"You know," said the prince, "how little my life has made me acquainted with diversity of opinions: it wil be too long to hear the arguments on both sides; you that have considered them, tell me the result."

"Pilgrimage," said Imlac, "like many other acts of piety, may be reasonable or superstitious, according to the principles upon which it is performed. Long journies in search of truth are not commanded. Truth, such as is necessary to the regulation of life, is always found where it is honestly sought. Change of place is no natural cause of the increase of piety, for it inevitably produces dissipation of mind. Yet, since men go every day to view the fields where great actions have been performed, and return with stronger impressions of the event, curiosity of the same kind may naturally dispose us to view that country whence our religion had its beginning; and I believe no man surveys those awful scenes without some confirmation of holy resolutions. That the Supreme Being may be more easily propitiated in one place than in an-

other, is the dream of idle superstition; but that some places may operate upon our own minds in an uncommon manner, is an opinion which hourly experience will justify. He who supposes that his vices may be more successfully combated in Palestine, will, perhaps, find himself mistaken, yet he may go thither without folly: he who thinks they will be more freely pardoned, dishonours at once his reason and religion."

"These," said the prince, "are European distinctions. I will consider them another time. What have you found to be the effect of knowledge? Are those nations happier than we?"

"There is so much infelicity," said the poet, "in the world, that scarce any man has leisure from his own distresses to estimate the comparative happiness of others. Knowledge is certainly one of the means of pleasure, as is confessed by the natural desire which every mind feels of increasing its ideas. Ignorance is mere privation, by which nothing can be produced: it is a vacuity in which the soul sits motionless and torpid for want of attraction: and, without knowing why, we always rejoice when we learn, and grieve when we forget. I am therefore inclined to conclude, that if nothing counteracts the natural consequence of learning, we grow more happy as our minds take a wider range.

"In enumerating the particular comforts of life, we shall find many advantages on the side of the Europeans. They cure wounds and diseases with which we languish and perish. We suffer inclemencies of weather which they can obviate. They have engines for the dispatch of many laborious works, which we must perform by manual industry. There is

such communication between distant places, that one friend can hardly be said to be absent from another. Their policy removes all publick inconveniencies: they have roads cut though their mountains, and bridges laid upon their rivers. And, if we descend to the privacies of life, their habitations are more commodious, and their possessions are more secure."

"They are surely happy," said the prince, "who have all these conveniencies, of which I envy none so much as the facility with which separated friends interchange their thoughts."

"The Europeans," answered Imlac, "are less unhappy than we, but they are not happy. Human life is every where a state in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed."

CHAP. XII.

THE STORY OF IMLAC CONTINUED.

"I AM not yet willing," said the prince, "to suppose that happiness is so parsimoniously distributed to mortals; nor can believe but that, if I had the choice of life, I should be able to fill every day with pleasure. I would injure no man, and should provoke no resentment: I would relieve every distress, and should enjoy the benedictions of gratitude. I would chuse my friends among the wise, and my wife among the virtuous; and therefore should be in no danger from treachery or unkindness. My children should, by my care,

be learned and pious, and would repay to my age what their childhood had received. What would dare to molest him who might call on every side to thousands enriched by his bounty, or assisted by his power? And why should not life glide quietly away in the soft reciprocation of protection and reverence? All this may be done without the help of European refinements, which appear by their effects to be rather specious than useful. Let us leave them, and pursue our journey."

"From Palestine," said Imlac, "I passed through many regions of Asia; in the more civilized kingdoms as a trader, and among the barbarians of the mountains as a pilgrim. At last I began to long for my native country, that I might repose, after my travels and fatigues, in the places where I had spent my earliest years, and gladden my old companions with the recital of my adventures. Often did I figure to myself those with whom I had sported away the gay hours of dawning life, sitting round me in its evening, wondering at my tales, and listening to my counsels.

"When this thought had taken possession of my mind, I considered every moment as wasted which did not bring me nearer to Abissinia. I hastened into Egypt, and notwithstanding my impatience, was detained ten months in the contemplation of its ancient magnificence, and in inquiries after the remains of its ancient learning. I found in Cairo a mixture of all nations; some brought thither by the love of knowledge, some by the hope of gain, and many by the desire of living after their own manner without observation, and of lying hid in the obscurity of multitudes: for in a

city, populous as Cairo, it is possible to obtain at the same time the gratifications of society, and the secrecy of solitude.

"From Cairo I travelled to Suez, and embarked on the Red Sea, passing along the coast till I arrived at the port from which I had departed twenty years before. Here I joined myself to a caravan, and re-entered my native country.

"I now expected the caresses of my kinsmen, and the congratulations of my friends, and was not without hope that my father, whatever value he had set upon riches, would own with gladness and pride a son who was able to add to the felicity and honour of the nation. But I was soon convinced that my thoughts were vain. My father had been dead fourteen years, having divided his wealth among my brothers, who were removed to some other provinces. Of my companions the greater part were in the grave; of the rest, some could with difficulty remember me, and some considered me as one corrupted by foreign manners.

"A man used to vicissitudes is not easily dejected. I forgot, after a time, my disappointment, and endeavoured to recommend myself to the nobles of the kingdom; they admitted me to their tables, heard my story, and dismissed me. I opened a school, and was prohibited to teach. I then resolved to sit down in the quiet of domestick life, and addressed a lady that was fond of my conversation, but rejected my suit because my father was a merchant.

"Wearied at last with solicitation and repulses, I resolved to hide myself for ever from the world, and depend no longer on the opinion or caprice of

others. I waited for the time when the gate of the *Happy Valley* should open, that I might bid farewell to hope and fear: the day came; my performance was distinguished with favour, and I resigned myself with joy to perpetual confinement."

"Hast thou here found happiness at last?" said Rasselas. "Tell me without reserve; art thou content with thy condition? or, dost thou wish to be again wandering and inquiring? All the inhabitants of this valley celebrate their lot, and at the annual visit of the emperor, invite others to partake of their felicity."

"Great prince," said Imlac, "I shall speak the truth; I know not one of all your attendants who does not lament the hour when he entered this retreat. I am less unhappy than the rest, because I have a mind replete with images, which I can vary and combine at pleasure. I can amuse my solitude by the renovation of the knowledge which begins to fade from my memory, and by recollection of the accidents of my past life. Yet all this ends in the sorrowful consideration, that my acquirements are now useless, and that none of my pleasures can be again enjoyed. The rest, whose minds have no impression but of the present moment, are either corroded by malignant passions, or sit stupid in the gloom of perpetual vacancy."

"What passions can infest those," said the prince, "who have no rivals? We are in a place where impotence precludes malice, and where all envy is repressed by community of enjoyments."

"There may be community," said Imlac, "of material possessions, but there can never be com-

munity of love or of esteem. It must happen that one will please more than another; he that knows himself despised will always be envious; and still more envious and malevolent, if he is condemned to live in the presence of those who despise him. The invitations, by which they allure others to a state which they feel to be wretched, proceed from the natural malignity of hopeless misery. They are weary of themselves, and of each other, and expect to find relief in new companions. They envy the liberty which their folly has forfeited, and would gladly see all mankind imprisoned like themselves.

"From this crime, however, I am wholly free. No man can say that he is wretched by my persuasion. I look with pity on the crowds who are annually soliciting admission to captivity, and wish that it were lawful for me to warn them of their danger."

"My dear Imlac," said the prince, "I will open to thee my whole heart. I have long meditated an escape from the Happy Valley. I have examined the mountains on every side, but find myself insuperably barred: teach me the way to break my prison; thou shalt be the companion of my flight, the guide of my rambles, the partner of my fortune, and my sole director in the *choice of life.*"

"Sir," answered the poet, "your escape will be difficult, and, perhaps, you may soon repent your curiosity. The world, which you figure to yourself smooth and quiet as the lake in the Valley, you will find a sea foaming with tempests, and boiling with whirlpools: you will be sometimes

overwhelmed by the waves of violence, and sometimes dashed against the rocks of treachery. Amidst wrongs and frauds, competitions and anxieties, you will wish a thousand times for these seats of quiet, and willingly quit hope to be free from fear."

"Do not seek to deter me from my purpose," said the prince. "I am impatient to see what thou hast seen; and, since thou art thyself weary of the Valley, it is evident, that thy former state was better than this. Whatever be the consequence of my experiment, I am resolved to judge, with mine own eyes, of the various conditions of men, and then to make deliberately my *choice of life*."

"I am afraid," said Imlac, "you are hindered by stronger restraints than my persuasions; yet, if your determination is fixed, I do not counsel you to despair. Few things are impossible to diligence and skill."

CHAP. XIII.

RASSELAS DISCOVERS THE MEANS OF ESCAPE.

THE prince now dismissed his favourite to rest, but the narrative of wonders and novelties filled his mind with perturbation. He revolved all that he had heard, and prepared innumerable questions for the morning.

Much of his uneasiness was now removed. He had a friend to whom he could impart his thoughts,

and whose experience could assist him in his designs. His heart was no longer condemned to swell with silent vexation. He thought that even the *Happy Valley* might be endured with such a companion, and that if they could range the world together, he should have nothing further to desire.

In a few days the water was discharged, and the ground dried. The prince and Imlac then walked out together to converse without the notice of the rest. The prince, whose thoughts were always on the wing, as he passed by the gate said, with a countenance of sorrow, "Why art thou so strong, and why is man so weak?"

"Man is not weak," answered his companion; "knowledge is more than equivalent to force. The master of mechanicks laughs at strength. I can burst the gate, but cannot do it secretly. Some other expedient must be tried."

As they were walking on the side of the mountain, they observed that the conies, which the rain had driven from their burrows, had taken shelter among the bushes, and formed holes behind them, tending upwards in an oblique line. "It has been the opinion of antiquity," said Imlac, "that human reason borrowed many arts from the instinct of animals; let us, therefore, not think ourselves degraded by learning from the coney. We may escape by piercing the mountain in the same direction. We will begin where the summit hangs over the middle part, and labour upward till we shall issue up beyond the prominence."

The eyes of the prince, when he heard this proposal, sparkled with joy. The execution was easy, and the success certain.

No time was now lost. They hastened early in the morning to chuse a place proper for their mine. They clambered with great fatigue among crags and brambles, and returned without having discovered any part that favoured their design. The second and the third day were spent in the same manner and with the same frustration. But, on the fourth, they found a small cavern, concealed by a thicket, where they resolved to make their experiment.

Imlac procured instruments proper to hew stone and remove earth, and they fell to their work on the next day with more eagerness than vigour. They were presently exhausted by their efforts, and sat down to pant upon the grass. The prince, for a moment, appeared to be discouraged. "Sir," said his companion, "practice will enable us to continue our labour for a longer time; mark, however, how far we have advanced, and you will find that our toil will some time have an end. Great works are performed, not by strength, but perseverance: yonder palace was raised by single stones, yet you see its height and spaciousness. He that shall walk with vigour three hours a day, will pass in seven years a space equal to the circumference of the globe."

They returned to their work day after day, and, in a short time, found a fissure in the rock, which enabled them to pass far with very little obstruction. This Rasselas considered as a good omen. "Do not disturb your mind," said Imlac, "with other hopes or fears than reason may suggest: if you are pleased with prognostics of good, you will be terrified likewise with tokens of evil, and your

whole life will be a prey to superstition. Whatever facilitates our work is more than an omen, it is a cause of success. This is one of those pleasing surprises which often happen to active resolution. Many things difficult to design prove easy to performance."

CHAP. XIV.

RASSELAS AND IMLAC RECEIVE AN UNEXPECTED VISIT.

THEY had now wrought their way to the middle, and solaced their toil with the approach of liberty, when the prince, coming down to refresh himself with air, found his sister Nekayah standing before the mouth of the cavity. He started and stood confused, afraid to tell his design, and yet hopeless to conceal it. A few moments determined him to repose on her fidelity, and secure her secrecy by a declaration without reserve.

"Do not imagine," said the princess, "that I came hither as a spy: I had long observed from my window, that you and Imlac directed your walk every day towards the same point, but I did not suppose you had any better reason for the preference than a cooler shade or more fragrant bank; nor followed you with any other design than to partake of your conversation. Since then not suspicion but fondness has detected you, let me not lose the advantage of my discovery. I am equally weary of confinement with yourself, and *not less* desirous of knowing what is done or suf-

fered in the world. Permit me to fly with you from this tasteless tranquillity, which will yet grow more loathsome when you have left me. You may deny me to accompany you, but cannot hinder me from following."

The prince, who loved Nekayah above his other sisters, had no inclination to refuse her request, and grieved that he had lost an opportunity of shewing his confidence by a voluntary communication. It was therefore agreed that she should leave the Valley with them; and that, in the mean time, she should watch, lest any other straggler should, by chance or curiosity, follow them to the mountain.

At length their labour was at an end; they saw light beyond the prominence, and, issuing to the top of the mountain, beheld the Nile, yet a narrow current, wandering beneath them.

The prince looked round with rapture, anticipated all the pleasures of travel, and in thought was already transported beyond his father's dominions. Imlac, though very joyful at his escape, had less expectation of pleasure in the world, which he had before tried, and of which he had been weary.

Rasselas was so much delighted with a wider horizon, that he could not soon be persuaded to return into the Valley. He informed his sister that the way was open, and that nothing now remained but to prepare for their departure.

CHAP. XV.

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS LEAVE THE VALLEY, AND SEE MANY WONDERS.

THE prince and princess had jewels sufficient to make them rich whenever they came into a place of commerce, which, by Imlac's direction, they hid in their clothes, and, on the night of the next full moon, all left the valley. The princess was followed only by a single favourite, who did not know whither she was going.

They clambered through the cavity, and began to go down on the other side. The princess and her maid turned their eyes towards every part, and, seeing nothing to bound their prospect, considered themselves as in danger of being lost in a dreary vacuity. They stopped and trembled. "I am almost afraid," said the princess, "to begin a journey of which I cannot perceive an end, and to venture into this immense plain, where I may be approached on every side by men whom I never saw." The prince felt nearly the same emotions, though he thought it more manly to conceal them.

Imlac smiled at their terrors, and encouraged them to proceed; but the princess continued irresolute till she had been imperceptibly drawn forward too far to return.

In the morning they found some shepherds in the field, who set milk and fruits before them. The princess wondered that she did not see a palace ready for her reception, and a table spread with delicacies; but, being faint and hungry, she drank

the milk and eat the fruits, and thought them of a higher flavour than the products of the Valley.

They travelled forward by easy journies, being all unaccustomed to toil or difficulty, and knowing, that though they might be missed, they could not be pursued. In a few days they came into a more populous region, where Imlac was diverted with the admiration which his companions expressed at the diversity of manners, stations, and employments.

Their dress was such as might not bring upon them the suspicion of having any thing to conceal, yet the prince, wherever he came, expected to be obeyed, and the princess was frighted, because those that came into her presence did not prostrate themselves before her. Imlac was forced to observe them with great vigilance, lest they should betray their rank by their unusual behaviour, and detained them several weeks in the first village, to accustom them to the sight of common mortals.

By degrees the royal wanderers were taught to understand that they had for a time laid aside their dignity, and were to expect only such regard as liberality and courtesy could procure. And Imlac having, by many admonitions, prepared them to endure the tumults of a port, and the ruggedness of the commercial race, brought them down to the sea-coast.

The prince and his sister, to whom every thing was new, were gratified equally at all places, and therefore remained for some months at the port without any inclination to pass further. Imlac was content with their stay, because he did not think it safe to expose them, unpractised in the world, to the hazards of a foreign country.

At last he began to fear lest they should be discovered, and proposed to fix a day for their departure. They had no pretensions to judge for themselves, and referred the whole scheme to his direction. He therefore took passage in a ship to Suez; and, when the time came, with great difficulty prevailed on the princess to enter the vessel. They had a quick and prosperous voyage, and from Suez travelled by land to Cairo.

CHAP. XVI.

THEY ENTER CAIRO, AND FIND EVERY MAN HAPPY.

AS they approached the city, which filled the strangers with astonishment, "This," said Imlac to the prince, "is the place where travellers and merchants assemble from all the corners of the earth. You will here find men of every character, and every occupation. Commerce is here honourable: I will act as a merchant, and you shall live as strangers, who have no other end of travel than curiosity; it will soon be observed that we are rich; our reputation will procure us access to all whom we shall desire to know; you will see all the conditions of humanity, and enable yourself at leisure to make your *choice of life*.

They now entered the town, stunned by the noise, and offended by the crowds. Instruction had not yet so prevailed over habit, but that they wondered to see themselves pass undistinguished along the street, and met by the lowest of the

people without reverence or notice. The princess could not at first bear the thought of being levelled with the vulgar, and, for some days, continued in her chamber, where she was served by her favourite Pekuah as in the palace of the Valley.

Imlac, who understood traffick, sold part of the jewels the next day, and hired a house, which he adorned with such magnificence, that he was immediately considered as a merchant of great wealth. His politeness attracted many acquaintance, and his generosity made him courted by many dependents. His table was crowded by men of every nation, who all admired his knowledge, and solicited his favour. His companions, not being able to mix in the conversation, could make no discovery of their ignorance or surprise, and were gradually initiated in the world as they gained knowledge of the language,

The prince had, by frequent lectures, been taught the use and nature of money; but the ladies could not, for a long time, comprehend what the merchants did with small pieces of gold and silver, or why things of so little use should be received as equivalent to the necessaries of life.

They studied the language two years, while Imlac was preparing to set before them the various ranks and conditions of mankind. He grew acacquainted with all who had any thing uncommon in their fortune or conduct. He frequented the voluptuous and the frugal, the idle and the busy, the merchants and the men of learning.

The prince being now able to converse with fluency, and having learned the caution necessary to be observed in his intercourse with strangers,

began to accompany Imlac to places of resort, and to enter into all assemblies, that he might make his *choice of life.*

For some time he thought choice needless, because all appeared to him equally happy. Wherever he went he met gaiety and kindness, and heard the song of joy or the laugh of carelessness. He began to believe that the world overflowed with universal plenty, and that nothing was withheld either from want or merit; that every hand showered liberality, and every heart melted with benevolence; "and who then," says he, "will be suffered to be wretched?"

Imlac permitted the pleasing delusion, and was unwilling to crush the hope of inexperience, till one day, having sat a while silent, "I know not," said the prince," "what can be the reason that I am more unhappy than any of our friends. I see them perpetually and unalterably cheerful, but feel my own mind restless and uneasy. I am unsatisfied with those pleasures which I seem most to court; I live in the crowds of jollity, not so much to enjoy company as to shun myself, and am only loud and merry to conceal my sadness."

"Every man," said Imlac, "may, by examining his own mind, guess what passes in the minds of others: when you feel that your own gaiety is counterfeit, it may justly lead you to suspect that of your companions not to be sincere. Envy is commonly reciprocal. We are long before we are convinced that happiness is never to be found, and each believes it possessed by others, to keep alive the hope of obtaining it for himself. In the assembly, where you passed the last night, there

appeared such sprightliness of air, and volatility of fancy, as might have suited beings of an higher order, formed to inhabit serener regions, inaccessible to care or sorrow: yet, believe me, prince, there was not one who did not dread the moment when solitude should deliver him to the tyranny of reflection."

"This," said the prince, "may be true of others, since it is true of me; yet, whatever be the general infelicity of man, one condition is more happy than another, and wisdom surely directs us to take the least evil in the *choice of life*."

"The causes of good and evil," answered Imlac, "are so various and uncertain, so often entangled with each other, so diversified by various relations, and so much subject to accidents which cannot be foreseen, that he who would fix his condition upon incontestible reasons of preference, must live and die inquiring and deliberating."

"But surely," said Rasselas, "the wise men, to whom we listen with reverence and wonder, chose that mode of life for themselves which they thought most likely to make them happy."

"Very few," said the poet, "live by choice. Every man is placed in his present condition by causes which acted without his foresight, and with which he did not always willingly co-operate; and therefore you will rarely meet one who does not think the lot of his neighbour better than his own."

"I am pleased to think," said the prince, "that my birth has given me at least one advantage over others, by enabling me to determine for myself. I have here the world before me; I will review it at leisure: surely happiness is somewhere to be found."

CHAP. XVII.

THE PRINCE ASSOCIATES WITH YOUNG MEN OF SPIRIT AND GAIETY.

RASSELAS rose next day, and resolved to begin his experiments upon life. "Youth," cried he, "is the time of gladness: I will join myself to the young men, whose only business is to gratify their desires, and whose time is all spent in a succession of enjoyments."

To such societies he was readily admitted, but a few days brought him back weary and disgusted. Their mirth was without images; their laughter without motive; their pleasures were gross and sensual, in which the mind had no part; their conduct was at once wild and mean; they laughed at order and at law, but the frown of power dejected, and the eye of wisdom abashed them.

The prince soon concluded, that he should never be happy in a course of life of which he was ashamed. He thought it unsuitable to a reasonable being to act without a plan, and to be sad or cheerful only by chance. "Happiness," said he, "must be something solid and permanent, without fear and without uncertainty."

But his young companions had gained so much of his regard by their frankness and courtesy, that he could not leave them without warning and remonstrance. "My friends," said he, "I have seriously considered our manners and our prospects, and find that we have mistaken our own interest. The first years of man must make provision for

the last. He that never thinks never can be wise. Perpetual levity must end in ignorance; and intemperance, though it may fire the spirits for an hour, will make life short or miserable. Let us consider that youth is of no long duration, and that in maturer age, when the enchantments of fancy shall cease, and phantoms of delight dance no more about us, we shall have no comforts but the esteem of wise men, and the means of doing good. Let us, therefore, stop, while to stop is in our power: let us live as men who are some time to grow old, and to whom it will be the most dreadful of all evils to count their past years by follies, and to be reminded of their former luxuriance of health only by the maladies which riot has produced."

They stared a while in silence one upon another, and at last drove him away by a general chorus of continued laughter.

The consciousness that his sentiments were just, and his intentions kind, was scarcely sufficient to support him against the horror of derision. But he recovered his tranquillity, and pursued his search.

CHAP. XVIII.

THE PRINCE FINDS A WISE AND HAPPY MAN.

AS he was one day walking in the street, he saw a spacious building, which all were, by the open doors, invited to enter: he followed the stream of

people, and found it a hall or school of declamation, in which professors read lectures to their auditory. He fixed his eye upon a sage raised above the rest, who discoursed with great energy on the government of the passions. His look was venerable, his action graceful, his pronunciation clear, and his diction elegant. He shewed, with great strength of sentiment, and variety of illustration, that human nature is degraded and debased, when the lower faculties predominate over the higher; that when fancy, the parent of passion, usurps the dominion of the mind, nothing ensues but the natural effect of unlawful government, perturbation and confusion; that she betrays the fortresses of the intellect to rebels, and excites her children to sedition against reason, their lawful sovereign. He compared reason to the sun, of which the light is constant, uniform, and lasting; and fancy to a meteor, of bright but transitory lustre, irregular in its motion, and delusive in its direction.

He then communicated the various precepts given from time to time for the conquest of passion, and displayed the happiness of those who had obtained the important victory, after which man is no longer the slave of fear, nor the fool of hope; is no more emaciated by envy, inflamed by anger, emasculated by tenderness, or depressed by grief; but walks on calmly through the tumults or privacies of life, as the sun pursues alike his course through the calm or the stormy sky.

He enumerated many examples of heroes immoveable by pain or pleasure, who looked with indifference on those modes or accidents to which the vulgar give the names of good and evil. He

exhorted his hearers to lay aside their prejudices, and arm themselves against the shafts of malice or misfortune, by invulnerable patience, concluding, that this state only was happiness, and that this happiness was in every one's power.

Rasselas listened to him with the veneration due to the instructions of a superior being, and, waiting for him at the door, humbly implored the liberty of visiting so great a master of true wisdom. The lecturer hesitated a moment, when Rasselas put a purse of gold into his hand, which he received with a mixture of joy and wonder.

"I have found," said the prince, at his return to Imlac, "a man who can teach all that is necessary to be known, who, from the unshaken throne of rational fortitude, looks down on the scenes of life changing beneath him. He speaks, and attention watches his lips. He reasons, and conviction closes his periods. This man shall be my future guide: I will learn his doctrines, and imitate his life."

"Be not too hasty," said Imlac, "to trust, or to admire, the teachers of morality: they discourse like angels, but they live like men."

Rasselas, who could not conceive how any man could reason so forcibly without feeling the cogency of his own arguments, paid his visit in a few days, and was denied admission. He had now learned the power of money, and made his way by a piece of gold to the inner apartment, where he found the philosopher in a room half darkened, with his eyes misty, and his face pale. "Sir," said he, "you are come at a time when all human friendship is useless; what I suffer cannot be re-

medied, what I have lost cannot be supplied. My daughter, my only daughter, from whose tenderness I expected all the comforts of my age, died last night of a fever. My views, my purposes, my hopes are at an end: I am now a lonely being disunited from society."

"Sir," said the prince, "mortality is an event by which a wise man can never be surprised: we know that death is always near, and it should therefore always be expected." "Young man," answered the philosopher, "you speak like one that has never felt the pangs of separation." "Have you then forgot the precepts," said Rasselas, "which you so powerfully enforced? Has wisdom no strength to arm the heart against calamity? Consider, that external things are naturally variable, but truth and reason are always the same." "What comfort," said the mourner, "can truth and reason afford me? of what effect are they now, but to tell me, that my daughter will not be restored?"

The prince, whose humanity would not suffer him to insult misery with reproof, went away convinced of the emptiness of rhetorical sound, and the inefficacy of polished periods and studied sentences.

CHAP. XIX.

A GLIMPSE OF PASTORAL LIFE.

HE was still eager upon the same inquiry; and having heard of a hermit, that lived near the lowest cataract of the Nile, and filled the whole country

with the fame of his sanctity, resolved to visit his retreat and inquire whether that felicity which publick life could not afford, was to be found in solitude; and whether a man whose age and virtue made him venerable, could teach any peculiar art of shunning evils, or enduring them.

Imlac and the princess agreed to accompany him, and, after the necessary preparations, they began their journey. Their way lay through the fields, where shepherds tended their flocks, and the lambs were playing upon the pasture. "This," said the poet, "is the life which has been often celebrated for its innocence and quiet; let us pass the heat of the day among the shepherds' tents, and know whether all our searches are not to terminate in pastoral simplicity."

The proposal pleased them, and they induced the shepherds, by small presents and familiar questions, to tell their opinion of their own state: they were so rude and ignorant, so little able to compare the good with the evil of the occupation, and so indistinct in their narrative and description, that very little could be learned from them. But it was evident that their hearts were cankered with discontent; that they considered themselves as condemned to labour for the luxury of the rich, and looked up with stupid malevolence toward those that were placed above them.

The princess pronounced with vehemence, that she would never suffer these envious savages to be her companions, and that she should not soon be desirous of seeing any more specimens of rustick happiness; but could not believe that all the accounts of primeval pleasures were fabulous; and

was yet in doubt, whether life had any thing that could be justly preferred to the placid gratifications of fields and woods. She hoped that the time would come, when, with a few virtuous and elegant companions, she should gather flowers planted by her own hand, fondle the lambs of her own ewe, and listen, without care, among brooks and breezes, to one of her maidens reading in the shade.

CHAP. XX.

THE DANGER OF PROSPERITY.

ON the next day they continued their journey, till the heat compelled them to look round for shelter. At a small distance they saw a thick wood, which they no sooner entered than they perceived that they were approaching the habitations of men. The shrubs were diligently cut away to open walks where the shades were darkest; the boughs of opposite trees were artificially interwoven; seats of flowery turf were raised in vacant spaces, and a rivulet, that wantoned along the side of a winding path, had its banks sometimes opened into small basons, and its streams sometimes obstructed by little mounds of stone, heaped together to increase its murmurs.

They passed slowly through the wood, delighted with such unexpected accommodations, and entertained each other with conjecturing what, or *who, he* could be, that, in those rude and unfre-

quented regions, had leisure and art for such harmless luxury.

As they advanced they heard the sound of musick, and saw youths and virgins dancing in the grove; and, going still further, beheld a stately palace built upon a hill surrounded with woods. The laws of eastern hospitality allowed them to enter, and the master welcomed them like a man liberal and wealthy.

He was skilful enough in appearances soon to discern that they were no common guests, and spread his table with magnificence. The eloquence of Imlac caught his attention, and the lofty courtesy of the princess excited his respect. When they offered to depart he entreated their stay, and was the next day still more unwilling to dismiss them than before. They were easily persuaded to stop, and civility grew up in time to freedom and confidence.

The prince now saw all the domesticks cheerful, and all the face of nature smiling round the place, and could not forbear to hope that he should find here what he was seeking; but when he was congratulating the master upon his possessions, he answered with a sigh. "My condition has indeed the appearance of happiness, but appearances are delusive. My prosperity puts my life in danger; the Bassa of Egypt is my enemy, incensed only by my wealth and popularity. I have been hitherto protected against him by the princes of the country; but as the favour of the great is uncertain, I know not how soon my defenders may be persuaded to share the plunder with the Bassa. I have sent my treasures into a distant country, and,

upon the first alarm, am prepared to follow them. Then will my enemies riot in my mansion, and enjoy the gardens which I have planted."

They all joined in lamenting his danger, and deprecating his exile: and the princess was so much disturbed with the tumult of grief and indignation, that she retired to her apartment. They continued with their kind inviter a few days longer, and then went forward to find the hermit.

CHAP. XXI.

THE HAPPINESS OF SOLITUDE. THE HERMIT'S HISTORY.

THEY came on the third day, by the direction of the peasants, to the hermit's cell: it was a cavern in the side of a mountain, over-shadowed with palm-trees; at such a distance from the cataract, that nothing more was heard than a gentle uniform murmur, such as composed the mind to pensive meditation, especially when it was assisted by the wind whistling among the branches. The first rude essay of nature had been so much improved by human labour, that the cave contained several apartments appropriated to different uses, and often afforded lodging to travellers, whom darkness or tempests happened to overtake.

The hermit sat on a bench at the door, to enjoy the coolness of the evening. On one side lay a book with pens and papers, on the other mechanical instruments of various kinds. As they ap-

proached him unregarded, the princess observed that he had not the countenance of a man that had found, or could teach the way to happiness.

They saluted him with great respect, which he repaid like a man not unaccustomed to the forms of courts. "My children," said he, "if you have lost your way, you shall be willingly supplied with such conveniencies for the night as this cavern will afford. I have all that nature requires, and you will not expect delicacies in a hermit's cell."

They thanked him, and entering, were pleased with the neatness and regularity of the place. The hermit set flesh and wine before them, though he fed only upon fruits and water. His discourse was cheerful without levity, and pious without enthusiasm. He soon gained the esteem of his guests, and the princess repented of her hasty censure.

At last Imlac began thus: "I do not now wonder that your reputation is so far extended; we have heard at Cairo of your wisdom, and came hither to implore your direction for this young man and maiden in the *choice of life*."

"To him that lives well," answered the hermit, "every form of life is good; nor can I give any other rule for choice, than to remove from all apparent evil."

"He will remove most certainly from evil," said the prince, "who shall devote himself to that solitude which you have recommended by your example."

"I have indeed lived fifteen years in solitude," said the hermit, "but have no desire that my ex-

ample should gain any imitators. In my youth I professed arms, and was raised by degrees to the highest military rank. I have traversed wide countries at the head of my troops, and seen many battles and sieges. At last, being disgusted by the preferments of a younger officer, and feeling that my vigour was beginning to decay, I was resolved to close my life in peace, having found the world full of snares, discord, and misery. I had once escaped from the pursuit of the enemy by the shelter of this cavern, and therefore chose it for my final residence. I employed artificers to form it into chambers, and stored it with all that I was likely to want.

"For some time after my retreat, I rejoiced like a tempest-beaten sailor at his entrance into the harbour, being delighted with the sudden change of the noise and hurry of war to stillnes and repose. When the pleasure of novelty went away, I employed my hours in examining the plants which grow in the valley, and the minerals which I collected from the rocks. But that inquiry is now grown tasteless and irksome. I have been for some time unsettled and distracted: my mind is disturbed with a thousand perplexities of doubt, and vanities of imagination, which hourly prevail upon me, because I have no opportunities of relaxation or diversion. I am sometimes ashamed to think that I could not secure myself from vice, but by retiring from the exercise of virtue, and begin to suspect that I was rather impelled by resentment, than led by devotion, into solitude. My fancy riots in scenes of folly, and I lament that I have lost so much, and have gained so little. In soli-

tude, if I escape the example of bad men, I want likewise the counsel and conversation of the good.

"I have been long comparing the evils with the advantages of society, and resolve to return into the world to-morrow. The life of a solitary man will be certainly miserable, but not certainly devout."

They heard his resolution with surprize, but after a short pause, offered to conduct him to Cairo. He dug up a considerable treasure which he had hid among the rocks, and accompanied them to the city, on which, as he approached it, he gazed with rapture.

CHAP. XXII.

THE HAPPINESS OF A LIFE LED ACCORDING TO NATURE.

RASSELAS went often to an assembly of learned men, who met at stated times to unbend their minds, and compare their opinions. Their manners were somewhat coarse, but their conversation was instructive, and their disputations acute, though sometimes too violent, and often continued till neither controvertist remembered upon what question they began. Some faults were almost general among them: every one was desirous to dictate to the rest, and every one was pleased to hear the genius or knowledge of another depreciated.

In this assembly Rasselas was relating his interview with the hermit, and the wonder with which

he heard him censure a course of life which he had so deliberately chosen, and so laudably followed. The sentiments of the hearers were various. Some were of opinion, that the folly of his choice had been justly punished by condemnation to perpetual perseverance. One of the youngest among them, with great vehemence, pronounced him a hypocrite. Some talked of the right of society to the labour of individuals, and considered retirement as a desertion of duty. Others readily allowed, that there was a time when the claims of the publick were satisfied, and when a man might properly sequester himself, to review his life, and purify his heart.

One, who appeared more affected with the narrative than the rest, thought it likely, that the hermit would, in a few years, go back to his retreat, and, perhaps, if shame did not restrain, or death intercept him, return once more from his retreat into the world: "For the hope of happiness," said he, "is so strongly impressed, that the longest experience is not able to efface it. Of the present state, whatever it be, we feel, and are forced to confess, the misery; yet, when the same state is again at a distance, imagination paints it as desirable. But the time will surely come, when desire will be no longer our torment, and no man shall be wretched but by his own fault."

"This," said a philosopher, who had heard him with tokens of great impatience, "is the present condition of a wise man. The time is already come, when none are wretched but by their own fault. Nothing is more idle, than to inquire after happiness, which nature has kindly placed within

our reach. The way to be happy is to live according to nature, in obedience to that universal and unalterable law with which every heart is originally impressed; which is not written on it by precept, but engraven by destiny, not instilled by education, but infused at our nativity. He that lives according to nature will suffer nothing from the delusions of hope, or importunities of desire: he will receive and reject with equability of temper; and act or suffer as the reason of things shall alternately prescribe. Other men may amuse themselves with subtle definitions, or intricate ratiocinations. Let them learn to be wise by easier means: let them observe the hind of the forest, and the linnet of the grove: let them consider the life of animals, whose motions are regulated by instinct; they obey their guide, and are happy. Let us therefore, at length, cease to dispute, and learn to live; throw away the incumbrance of precepts, which they who utter them with so much pride and pomp do not understand, and carry with us this simple and intelligible maxim, That deviation from nature is deviation from happiness."

When he had spoken, he looked round him with a placid air, and enjoyed the consciousness of his own beneficence. "Sir," said the prince, with great modesty, "as I, like all the rest of mankind, am desirous of felicity, my closest attention has been fixed upon your discourse: I doubt not the truth of a position which a man so learned has so confidently advanced. Let me only know what it is to live according to nature."

"When I find young men so humble and so docile," said the philosopher, "I can deny them

no information which my studies have enabled me to afford. To live according to nature, is to act always with due regard to the fitness arising from the relations and qualities of causes and effects; to concur with the great and unchangeable scheme of universal felicity; to co-operate with the general disposition and tendency of the present system of things."

The prince soon found that this was one of the sages whom he should understand less as he heard him longer. He therefore bowed and was silent, and the philosopher, supposing him satisfied, and the rest vanquished, rose up and departed with the air of a man that had co-operated with the present system.

CHAP. XXIII.

THE PRINCE AND HIS SISTER DIVIDE BETWEEN THEM THE WORK OF OBSERVATION.

RASSELAS returned home full of reflections, doubtful how to direct his future steps. Of the way to happiness he found the learned and simple equally ignorant; but, as he was yet young, he flattered himself that he had time remaining for more experiments, and further inquiries. He communicated to Imlac his observations and his doubts, but was answered by him with new doubts, and remarks that gave him no comfort. He therefore discoursed more frequently and freely with his sister, who had yet the same hope with himself, and always assisted him to give some reason why,

though he had been hitherto frustrated, he might succeed at last.

"We have hitherto," said she, "known but little of the world: we have never yet been either great or mean. In our own country, though we had royalty, we had no power, and in this we have not yet seen the private recesses of domestick peace. Imlac favours not our search, lest we should in time find him mistaken. We will divide the task between us: you shall try what is to be found in the splendour of courts, and I will range the shades of humbler life. Perhaps command and authority may be the supreme blessings, as they afford most opportunities of doing good: or, perhaps, what this world can give may be found in the modest habitations of middle fortune; too low for great designs, and too high for penury and distress."

CHAP. XXIV.

THE PRINCE EXAMINES THE HAPPINESS OF HIGH STATIONS.

RASSELAS applauded the design, and appeared next day with a splendid retinue at the court of the Bassa. He was soon distinguished for his magnificence, and admitted, as a prince whose curiosity had brought him from distant countries, to an intimacy with the great officers, and frequent conversation with the Bassa himself.

He was at first inclined to believe, that the man must be pleased with his own condition, whom all

approached with reverence, and heard with obedience, and who had the power to extend his edicts to a whole kingdom. "There can be no pleasure," said he, "equal to that of feeling at once the joy of thousands all made happy by wise administration. Yet, since, by the law of subordination, this sublime delight can be in one nation but the lot of one, it is surely reasonable to think, that there is some satisfaction more popular and accessible, and that millions can hardly be subjected to the will of a single man, only to fill his particular breast with incommunicable content."

These thoughts were often in his mind, and he found no solution of the difficulty. But as presents and civilities gained him more familiarity, he found that almost every man who stood high in employment hated all the rest, and was hated by them, and that their lives were a continual succession of plots and detections, stratagems and escapes, faction and treachery. Many of those who surrounded the Bassa, were sent only to watch and report his conduct; every tongue was muttering censure, and every eye was searching for a fault.

At last the letters of revocation arrived, the Bassa was carried in chains to Constantinople, and his name was mentioned no more.

"What are we now to think of the prerogatives of power?" said Rasselas to his sister; "is it without any efficacy to good? or, is the subordinate degree only dangerous, and the supreme safe and glorious? Is the Sultan the only happy man in his dominions? or, is the Sultan himself subject to the torments of suspicion, and the dread of enemies?"

In a short time the second Bassa was deposed.

The Sultan, that had advanced him, was murdered by the Janisaries, and his successor had other views and different favourites.

CHAP. XXV.

THE PRINCESS PURSUES HER INQUIRY WITH MORE DILIGENCE THAN SUCCESS.

THE princess, in the mean time, insinuated herself into many families; for there are few doors, through which liberality, joined with good-humour, cannot find its way. The daughters of many houses were airy and cheerful, but Nekayah had been too long accustomed to the conversation of Imlac and her brother to be much pleased with childish levity, and prattle which had no meaning. She found their thoughts narrow, their wishes low, and their merriment often artificial. Their pleasures, poor as they were, could not be preserved pure, but were embittered by petty competitions and worthless emulation. They were always jealous of the beauty of each other; of a quality to which solicitude can add nothing, and from which detraction can take nothing away. Many were in love with trifles like themselves, and many fancied that they were in love when in truth they were only idle. Their affection was not fixed on sense or virtue, and therefore seldom ended but in vexation. Their grief, however, like their joy, was transient; every thing floated in their mind unconnected with the past or future, so that one desire

easily gave way to another, as a second stone cast into the water effaces and confounds the circles of the first.

With these girls she played as with inoffensive animals, and found them proud of her countenance, and weary of her company.

But her purpose was to examine more deeply, and her affability easily persuaded the hearts that were swelling with sorrow, to discharge their secrets in her ear: and those whom hope flattered, or prosperity delighted, often courted her to partake their pleasures.

The princess and her brother commonly met in the evening in a private summer-house on the bank of the Nile, and related to each other the occurrences of the day. As they were sitting together, the princess cast her eyes upon the river that flowed before her. "Answer," said she, "great father of waters, thou that rollest thy floods through eighty nations, to the invocations of the daughter of thy native king. Tell me if thou waterest, through all thy course, a single habitation from which thou dost not hear the murmurs of complaint?"

"You are then," said Rasselas, "not more succesful in private houses than I have been in courts." "I have, since the last partition of our provinces," said the princess, "enabled myself to enter familiarly into many families, where there was the fairest shew of prosperity and peace, and know not one house that is not haunted by some fury that destroys their quiet.

"I did not seek ease among the poor, because I concluded that there it could not be found. But

I saw many poor whom I supposed to live in affluence. Poverty has, in large cities, very different appearances: it is often concealed in splendour, and often in extravagance. It is the care of a very great part of mankind to conceal their indigence from the rest: they support themselves by temporary expedients, and every day is lost in contriving for the morrow.

"This, however, was an evil, which, though frequent, I saw with less pain, because I could relieve it. Yet some have refused my bounties; more offended with my quickness to detect their wants, than pleased with my readiness to succour them: and others, whose exigencies compelled them to admit my kindness, have never been able to forgive their benefactress. Many, however, have been sincerely grateful, without the ostentation of gratitude, or the hope of other favours."

CHAP. XXVI.

THE PRINCESS CONTINUES HER REMARKS UPON PRIVATE LIFE.

NEKAYAH perceiving her brother's attention fixed, proceeded in her narrative.

"In families, where there is or is not poverty, there is commonly discord: if a kingdom be, as Imlac tells us, a great family, a family likewise is a little kingdom, torn with factions, and exposed to revolutions. An unpractised observer expects the love of parents and children to be constant and

equal; but this kindness seldom continues beyond the years of infancy: in a short time the children become rivals to their parents. Benefits are allayed by reproaches, and gratitude debased by envy.

"Parents and children seldom act in concert: each child endeavours to appropriate the esteem or fondness of the parents, and the parents, with yet less temptation, betray each other to their children: thus some place their confidence in the father, and some in the mother, and by degrees the house is filled with artifices and feuds.

"The opinions of children and parents, of the young and the old, are naturally opposite, by the contrary effects of hope and despondence, of expectation and experience, without crime or folly on either side. The colours of life in youth and age appear different, as the face of nature in spring and winter. And how can children credit the assertions of parents, which their own eyes show them to be false?

"Few parents act in such a manner as much to enforce their maxims by the credit of their lives. The old man trusts wholly to slow contrivance and gradual progression: the youth expects to force his way by genius, vigour, and precipitance. The old man pays regard to riches, and the youth reverences virtue. The old man deifies prudence: the youth commits himself to magnanimity and chance. The young man who intends no ill, believes that none is intended, and therefore acts with openness and candour: but his father, having suffered the injuries of fraud, is impelled to suspect, and too often allured to practise it. Age looks with anger on the temerity of youth, and youth

with contempt on the scrupulosity of age. Thus parents and children, for the greatest part, live on to love less and less: and, if those whom nature has thus closely united are the torments of each other, where shall we look for tenderness and consolation?"

"Surely," said the prince, "you must have been unfortunate in your choice of acquaintance: I am unwilling to believe, that the most tender of all relations is thus impeded in its effects by natural necessity."

"Domestick discord," answered she, "is not inevitably and fatally necessary; but yet it is not easily avoided. We seldom see that a whole family is virtuous: the good and evil cannot well agree; and the evil can yet less agree with one another: even the virtuous fall sometimes to variance, when their virtues are of different kinds, and tending to extremes. In general, those parents have most reverence who most deserve it: for he that lives well cannot be despised.

"Many other evils infest private life. Some are the slaves of servants whom they have trusted with their affairs. Some are kept in continual anxiety to the caprice of rich relations, whom they cannot please, and dare not offend. Some husbands are imperious, and some wives perverse: and, as it is always more easy to do evil than good, though the wisdom or virtue of one can very rarely make many happy, the folly or vice of one may often make many miserable."

"If such be the general effect of marriage," said the prince, "I shall, for the future, think it dangerous to connect my interest with that of an-

other, lest I should be unhappy by my partner's fault."

"I have met," said the princess, "with many who live single for that reason; but I never found that their prudence ought to raise envy. They dream away their time without friendship, without fondness, and are driven to rid themselves of the day, for which they have no use, by childish amusements, or vicious delights. They act as beings under the constant sense of some known inferiority, that fills their minds with rancour, and their tongues with censure. They are peevish at home, and malevolent abroad; and, as the outlaws of human nature, make it their business and their pleasure to disturb that society which debars them from its privileges. To live without feeling or exciting sympathy, to be fortunate without adding to the felicity of others, or afflicted without tasting the balm of pity, is a state more gloomy than solitude: it is not retreat, but exclusion from mankind. Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures."

"What then is to be done?" said Rasselas; "the more we inquire, the less we can resolve. Surely he is most likely to please himself, that has no other inclination to regard."

CHAP. XXVII.

DISQUISITION UPON GREATNESS.

THE conversation had a short pause. The prince, having considered his sister's observations, told her, that she had surveyed life with prejudice, and sup-

posed misery where she did not find it. "Your narrative," says he, "throws yet a darker gloom upon the prospects of futurity; the predictions of Imlac were but faint sketches of the evils painted by Nekayah. I have been lately convinced that quiet is not the daughter of grandeur, or of power; that her presence is not to be bought by wealth, nor enforced by conquest. It is evident, that as any man acts in a wider compass, he must be more exposed to opposition from enmity, or miscarriage from chance; whoever has many to please or to govern, must use the ministry of many agents, some of whom will be wicked, and some ignorant; by some he will be misled, and by others betrayed. If he gratifies one he will offend another; those that are not favoured will think themselves injured; and, since favours can be conferred but upon few, the greater number will be always discontented."

"The discontent," said the princess, "which is thus unreasonable, I hope that I shall always have spirit to despise, and you power to repress."

"Discontent," answered Rasselas, "will not always be without reason under the most just and vigilant administration of publick affairs. None, however attentive, can always discover that merit which indigence or faction may happen to obscure; and none, however powerful, can always reward it. Yet, he that sees inferior desert advanced above him, will naturally impute that preference to partiality or caprice; and, indeed, it can scarcely be hoped that any man, however magnanimous by nature, or exalted by condition, will be able to persist for ever in the fixed and inexorable justice

of distribution; he will sometimes indulge his own affections, and sometimes those of his favourites; he will permit some to please him who can never serve him; he will discover in those whom he loves, qualities which in reality they do not possess; and to those, from whom he receives pleasure, he will in his turn endeavour to give it. Thus will recommendations sometimes prevail which were purchased by money, or by the more destructive bribery of flattery and servility.

"He that has much to do will do something wrong, and of that wrong must suffer the consequences; and, if it were possible that he should always act rightly, yet when such numbers are to judge of his conduct, the bad will censure and obstruct him by malevolence, and the good sometimes by mistake.

"The highest stations cannot therefore hope to be the abodes of happiness, which I would willingly believe to have fled from thrones and palaces to seats of humble privacy and placid obscurity. For what can hinder the satisfaction, or intercept the expectations, of him whose abilities are adequate to his employments, who sees with his own eyes the whole circuit of his influence, who chooses by his own knowledge all whom he trusts, and whom none are tempted to deceive by hope or fear? Surely he has nothing to do but to love and to be loved, to be virtuous and to be happy."

"Whether perfect happiness would be procured by perfect goodness," said Nekayah, "this world will never afford an opportunity of deciding. But this, at least, may be maintained, that we do not always find visible happiness in proportion to visible

virtue. All natural, and almost all political evils, are incident alike to the bad and good: they are confounded in the misery of a famine, and not much distinguished in the fury of a faction; they sink together in a tempest, and are driven together from their country by invaders. All that virtue can afford is quietness of conscience, a steady prospect of a happier state; this may enable us to endure calamity with patience; but remember that patience must suppose pain."

CHAP. XXVIII.

RASSELAS AND NEKAYAH CONTINUE THEIR CONVERSATION.

"DEAR princess," said Rasselas, "you fall into the common errors of exaggeratory declamation, by producing, in a familiar disquisition, examples of national calamities, and scenes of extensive misery, which are found in books rather than in the world, and which, as they are horrid, are ordained to be rare. Let us not imagine evils which we do not feel, nor injure life by misrepresentations. I cannot bear that querulous eloquence which threatens every city with a siege like that of Jerusalem, that makes famine attend on every flight of locusts, and suspends pestilence on the wing of every blast that issues from the south.

"On necessary and inevitable evils, which overwhelm kingdoms at once, all disputation is vain;

when they happen they must be endured. But it is evident, that these bursts of universal distress are more dreaded than felt; thousands and ten thousands flourish in youth, and wither in age, without the knowledge of any other than domestick evils, and share the same pleasures and vexations, whether their kings are mild or cruel, whether the armies of their country pursue their enemies, or retreat before them. While courts are disturbed with intestine competitions, and ambassadors are negociating in foreign countries, the smith still plies his anvil, and the husbandman drives his plough forward; the necessaries of life are required and obtained; and the successive business of the seasons continues to make its wonted revolutions.

"Let us cease to consider what, perhaps, may never happen, and what, when it shall happen, will laugh at human speculation. We will not endeavour to modify the motions of the elements, or to fix the destiny of kingdoms. It is our business to consider what beings like us may perform; each labouring for his own happiness, by promoting within his circle, however narrow, the happiness of others.

"Marriage is evidently the dictate of nature; men and women are made to be companions of each other, and therefore I cannot be persuaded but that marriage is one of the means of happiness."

"I know not," said the princess, "whether marriage be more than one of the innumerable modes of human misery. When I see and reckon the various forms of connubial infelicity, the unexpected causes of lasting discord, the diversities of temper, the oppositions of opinion, the rude col-

lisions of contrary desire where both are urged by violent impulses, the obstinate contests of disagreeable virtues, where both are supported by consciousness of good intention; I am sometimes disposed to think, with the severer casuists of most nations, that marriage is rather permitted than approved, and that none, but by the instigation of a passion too much indulged, entangle themselves with indissoluble compacts."

"You seem to forget," replied Rasselas, "that you have, even now, represented celibacy as less happy than marriage. Both conditions may be bad, but they cannot both be worst. Thus it happens when wrong opinions are entertained, that they mutually destroy each other, and leave the mind open to truth."

"I did not expect," answered the princess, "to hear that imputed to falsehood which is the consequence only of frailty. To the mind, as to the eye, it is difficult to compare with exactness objects vast in their extent, and various in their parts. Where we see or conceive the whole at once, we readily note the discriminations, and decide the preference: but of two systems of which neither can be surveyed by any human being in its full compass of magnitude and multiplicity of complication, where is the wonder that judging of the whole by parts, I am alternately affected by one and the other as either presses on my memory or fancy? We differ from ourselves just as we differ from each other, when we see only part of the question, as in the multifarious relations of politicks and morality; but when we perceive the whole at once, as in numerical computations, all

agree in one judgment, and none ever varies his opinion."

"Let us not add," said the prince, "to the other evils of life, the bitterness of controversy, nor endeavour to vie with each other in subtilities of argument. We are employed in a search, of which both are equally to enjoy the success, or suffer by the miscarriage. It is therefore fit that we assist each other. You surely conclude too hastily from the infelicity of marriage against its institution: will not the misery of life prove equally that life cannot be the gift of Heaven? The world must be peopled by marriage, or peopled without it."

"How the world is to be peopled," returned Nekayah, "is not my care, and needs not be yours. I see no danger that the present generation should omit to leave successors behind them; we are not now inquiring for the world, but for ourselves."

CHAP. XXIX.

THE DEBATE ON MARRIAGE CONTINUED.

"THE good of the whole," says Rasselas, "is the same with the good of all its parts. If marriage be best for mankind, it must be evidently best for individuals, or a permanent and necessary duty must be the cause of evil, and some must be inevitably sacrificed to the convenience of others. In the estimate which you have made of the two states, it appears that the incommodities of a single

life are, in a great measure necessary and certain, but those of the conjugal state accidental and avoidable.

"I cannot forbear to flatter myself, that prudence and benevolence will make marriage happy. The general folly of mankind is the cause of general complaint. What can be expected but disappointment and repentance from a choice made in the immaturity of youth, in the ardour of desire, without judgment, without foresight, without inquiry after conformity of opinions similarity of manners, rectitude of judgment, or purity of sentiment?

"Such is the common process of marriage. A youth or maiden meeting by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home, and dream of one another. Having little to divert attention, or diversify thought, they find themselves uneasy when they are apart, and therefore conclude that they shall be happy together. They marry, and discover what nothing but voluntary blindness before had concealed; they wear out life in altercations, and charge nature with cruelty.

"From those early marriages proceeds likewise the rivalry of parents and children: the son is eager to enjoy the world before the father is willing to forsake it, and there is hardly room at once for two generations. The daughter begins to bloom before the mother can be content to fade, and neither can forbear to wish for the absence of the other.

"Surely all these evils may be avoided by that deliberation and delay which prudence prescribes

to irrevocable choice. In the variety and jollity of youthful pleasures, life may be well enough supported without the help of a partner. Longer time will increase experience, and wider views will allow better opportunities of inquiry and selection; one advantage, at least, will be certain; the parents will be visibly older than their children."

"What reason cannot collect," said Nekayah, "and what experiment has not yet taught, can be known only from the report of others. I have been told that late marriages are not eminently happy. This is a question too important to be neglected, and I have often proposed it to those, whose accuracy of remark, and comprehensiveness of knowledge, made their suffrages worthy of regard. They have generally determined, that it is dangerous for a man and woman to suspend their fate upon each other, at a time when opinions are fixed, and habits are established; when friendships have been contracted on both sides, when life has been planned into method, and the mind has long enjoyed the contemplation of its own prospects.

"It is scarcely possible that two travelling through the world under the conduct of chance, should have been both directed to the same path, and it will not often happen that either will quit the track which custom has made pleasing. When the desultory levity of youth has settled into regularity, it is soon succeeded by pride ashamed to yield, or obstinacy delighting to contend. And even though mutual esteem produces mutual desire to please, time itself, as it modifies unchangeably the external mien, determines likewise the direction of the passions, and gives an inflexible rigidity to

the manners. Long customs are not easily broken: he that attempts to change the course of his own life very often labours in vain; and how shall we do that for others, which we are seldom able to do for ourselves?"

"But surely," interposed the prince, "you suppose the chief motive of choice forgotten or neglected. Whenever I shall seek a wife, it shall be my first question, whether she be willing to be led by reason?"

"Thus it is," said Nekayah, "that philosophers are deceived. There are a thousand familiar disputes which reason never can decide; questions that elude investigation and make logick ridiculous; cases where something must be done, and where little can be said. Consider the state of mankind, and inquire how few can be supposed to act upon any occasions, whether small or great, with all the reasons of action present to their minds. Wretched would be the pair above all names of wretchedness, who should be doomed to adjust by reason, every morning, all the minute detail of a domestick day.

"Those who marry at an advanced age, will probably escape the encroachments of their children; but, in diminution of this advantage, they will be likely to leave them, ignorant and helpless, to a guardian's mercy: or, if that should not happen, they must at least go out of the world before they see those whom they love best either wise or great.

"From their children, if they have less to fear, they have less also to hope, and they lose, without equivalent, the joys of early love, and the conve-

nience of uniting with manners pliant, and minds susceptible of new impressions, which might wear away their dissimilitudes by long cohabitation, as soft bodies, by continual attrition, conform their surfaces to each other.

"I believe it will be found that those who marry late are best pleased with their children, and those who marry early with their partners."

"The union of these two affections," said Rasselas, "would produce all that could be wished. Perhaps there is a time when marriage might unite them, a time neither too early for the father, nor too late for the husband."

"Every hour," answered the princess, "confirms my prejudice in favour of the position so often uttered by the mouth of Imlac, 'That nature sets her gifts on the right hand and on the left.' Those conditions, which flatter hope and attract desire, are so constituted, that as we approach one, we recede from another. There are goods so opposed that we cannot seize both, but, by too much prudence, may pass between them at too great a distance to reach either. This is often the fate of long consideration; he does nothing who endeavours to do more than is allowed to humanity. Flatter not yourself with contrarieties of pleasure. Of the blessings set before you make your choice, and be content. No man can taste the fruits of autumn, while he is delighting his scent with the flowers of the spring: no man can, at the same time, fill his cup from the source and from the mouth of the Nile."

CHAP. XXX.

IMLAC ENTERS, AND CHANGES THE CONVERSATION.

HERE Imlac entered, and interrupted them. "Imlac," said Rasselas, "I have been taking from the princess the dismal history of private life, and am almost discouraged from further search."

"It seems to me," said Imlac, "that while you are making the choice of life, you neglect to live. You wander about a single city, which, however large and diversified, can now afford few novelties, and forget that you are in a country, famous among the earliest monarchies for the power and wisdom of its inhabitants; a country where the sciences first dawned that illuminate the world, and beyond which the arts cannot be traced of civil society or domestick life.

"The old Egyptians have left behind them monuments of industry and power, before which all European magnificence is confessed to fade away. The ruins of their architecture are the schools of modern builders; and from the wonders which time has spared, we may conjecture, though uncertainly, what it has destroyed."

"My curiosity," said Rasselas, "does not very strongly lead me to survey piles of stone, or mounds of earth; my business is with man. I came hither not to measure fragments of temples, or trace choked aqueducts, but to look upon the various scenes of the present world."

"The things that are now before us," said the

princess, "require attention, and deserve it. What have I to do with the heroes or the monuments of ancient times? with times which never can return, and heroes, whose form of life was different from all that the present condition of mankind requires or allows?"

"To know any thing," returned the poet, "we must know its effects; to see men we must see their works, that we may learn what reason has dictated or passion has incited, and find what are the most powerful motives of action. To judge rightly of the present we must oppose it to the past; for all judgment is comparative, and of the future nothing can be known. The truth is, that no mind is much employed upon the present: recollection and anticipation fill up almost all our moments. Our passions are joy and grief, love and hatred, hope and fear. Of joy and grief the past is the object, and the future of hope and fear; even love and hatred respect the past, for the cause must have been before the effect.

"The present state of things is the consequence of the former, and it is natural to inquire what were the sources of the good that we enjoy, or the evil that we suffer. If we act only for ourselves, to neglect the study of history is not prudent: if we are intrusted with the care of others, it is not just. Ignorance, when it is voluntary, is criminal; and he may properly be charged with evil, who refused to learn how he might prevent it.

"There is no part of history so generally useful as that which relates the progress of the human mind, the gradual improvement of reason, the successive advances of science, the vicissitudes of

learning and ignorance, which are the light and darkness of thinking beings, the extinction and resuscitation of arts, and the revolutions of the intellectual world. If accounts of battles and invasions are peculiarly the business of princes, the useful or elegant arts are not to be neglected; those who have kingdoms to govern, have understandings to cultivate.

"Example is always more efficacious than precept. A soldier is formed in war, and a painter must copy pictures. In this, contemplative life has the advantage: great actions are seldom seen, but the labours of art are always at hand for those who desire to know what art has been able to perform.

"When the eye or the imagination is struck with an uncommon work, the next transition of an active mind is to the means by which it was performed. Here begins the true use of such contemplation; we enlarge our comprehension by new ideas, and perhaps recover some art lost to mankind, or learn what is less perfectly known in our own country. At least we compare our own with former times, and either rejoice at our improvements, or, what is the first motion towards good, discover our defects."

"I am willing," said the prince, "to see all that can deserve my search." "And I," said the princess, "shall rejoice to learn something of the manners of antiquity."

"The most pompous monument of Egyptian greatness, and one of the most bulky works of manual industry," said Imlac, "are the pyramids; fabricks raised before the time of history,

and of which the earliest narratives afford us only uncertain traditions. Of these, the greatest is still standing very little injured by time."

"Let us visit them to-morrow," said Nekayah. "I have often heard of the pyramids, and shall not rest till I have seen them within and without with my own eyes."

CHAP. XXXI.

THEY VISIT THE PYRAMIDS.

THE resolution being thus taken, they set out the next day. They laid tents upon their camels, being resolved to stay among the pyramids till their curiosity was fully satisfied. They travelled gently, turned aside to every thing remarkable, stopped from time to time and conversed with the inhabitants, and observed the various appearances of towns ruined and inhabited, of wild and cultivated nature.

When they came to the great pyramid, they were astonished at the extent of the base, and the height of the top. Imlac explained to them the principles upon which the pyramidal form was chosen for a fabrick, intended to co-extend its duration with that of the world: he shewed that its gradual diminution gave it such stability as defeated all the common attacks of the elements, and could scarcely be overthrown by earthquakes themselves, the least resistible of natural violence. A concussion that should shatter the pyramid would threaten the dissolution of the continent.

They measured all its dimensions, and pitched their tents at its foot. Next day they prepared to enter its interior apartments, and, having hired the common guides, climbed up to the first passage, when the favourite of the princess, looking into the cavity, stepped back and trembled. "Pekuah," said the princess, "of what art thou afraid?" "Of the narrow entrance," answered the lady, "and of the dreadful gloom. I dare not enter a place which must surely be inhabited by unquiet souls. The original possessors of these dreadful vaults will start up before us, and perhaps shut us in for ever." She spoke, and threw her arms round the neck of her mistress.

"If all your fear be of apparitions," said the prince, "I will promise you safety: there is no danger from the dead; he that is once buried will be seen no more."

"That the dead are seen no more," said Imlac, "I will not undertake to maintain, against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages, and of all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which perhaps prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth: those that never heard of one another, would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible. That it is doubted by single cavillers, can very little weaken the general evidence; and some who deny it with their tongues confess it by their fears.

"Yet I do not mean to add new terrors to those which have already seized upon Pekuah,

There can be no reason why spectres should haunt the pyramid more than other places, or why they should have power or will to hurt innocence and purity. Our entrance is no violation of their privileges; we can take nothing from them, how then can we offend them?"

"My dear Pekuah," said the princess, "I will always go before you, and Imlac shall follow you. Remember that you are the companion of the princess of Abissinia."

"If the princess is pleased that her servant should die," returned the lady, "let her command some death less dreadful than enclosure in this horrid cavern. You know I dare not disobey you: I must go if you command me; but, if I once enter, I never shall come back."

The princess saw that her fear was too strong for expostulation or reproof, and embracing her, told her that she should stay in the tent till their return. Pekuah was yet not satisfied, but entreated the princess not to pursue so dreadful a purpose as that of entering the recesses of the pyramid. "Though I cannot teach courage," said Nekayah, "I must not learn cowardice; nor leave at last undone what I came hither only to do."

CHAP. XXXII.

THEY ENTER THE PYRAMID.

PEKUAH descended to the tents, and the rest entered the pyramid: they passed through the galleries, surveyed the vaults of marble, and exa-

mined the chest in which the body of the founder is supposed to have been reposited. They then sat down in one of the most spacious chambers to rest a while before they attempted to return.

"We have now," said Imlac, "gratified our minds with an exact view of the greatest work of man, except the wall of China.

"Of the wall it is very easy to assign the motive. It secured a wealthy and timorous nation from the incursions of barbarians, whose unskilfulness in arts made it easier for them to supply their wants by rapine than by industry, and who from time to time poured in upon the habitations of peaceful commerce, as vultures descend upon domestick fowl. Their celerity and fierceness made the wall necessary, and their ignorance made it efficacious.

"But for the pyramids no reason has ever been given adequate to the cost and labour of the work. The narrowness of the chambers proves that it could afford no retreat from enemies, and treasures might have been reposited at far less expence with equal security. It seems to have been erected only in compliance with that hunger of imagination which preys incessantly upon life, and must be always appeased by some employment. Those who have already all that they can enjoy, must enlarge their desires. He that has built for use, till use is supplied, must begin to build for vanity, and extend his plan to the utmost power of human performance, that he may not be soon reduced to form another wish.

"I consider this mighty structure as a monument of the insufficiency of human enjoyments.

A king, whose power is unlimited, and whose treasures surmount all real and imaginary wants, is compelled to solace, by the erection of a pyramid, the satiety of dominion and tastelessness of pleasures, and to amuse the tediousness of declining life, by seeing thousands labouring without end, and one stone, for no purpose, laid upon another. Whoever thou art, that, not content with a moderate condition, imaginest happiness in royal magnificence, and dreamest that command or riches can feed the appetite of novelty with perpetual gratifications, survey the pyramids, and confess thy folly!"

CHAP. XXXIII.

THE PRINCESS MEETS WITH AN UNEXPECTED MISFORTUNE.

THEY rose up, and returned through the cavity at which they had entered, and the princess prepared for her favourite a long narrative of dark labyrinths, and costly rooms, and of the different impressions which the varieties of the way had made upon her. But when they came to their train, they found every one silent and dejected: the men discovered shame and fear in their countenances, and the women were weeping in the tents.

What had happened they did not try to conjecture, but immediately inquired. "You had scarcely entered into the pyramid," said one of the attendants, "when a troop of Arabs rushed upon us: we were too few to resist them, and too slow

to escape. They were about to search the tents, set us on our camels, and drive us along before them, when the approach of some Turkish horsemen put them to flight; but they seized the lady Pekuah with her two maids, and carried them away: the Turks are now pursuing them by our instigation, but I fear they will not be able to overtake them."

The princess was overpowered with surprize and grief. Rasselas, in the first heat of his resentment, ordered his servants to follow him, and prepared to pursue the robbers with his sabre in his hand. "Sir," said Imlac, "what can you hope from violence or valour? the Arabs are mounted on horses trained to battle and retreat; we have only beasts of burden. By leaving our present station we may lose the princess, but cannot hope to regain Pekuah."

In a short time the Turks returned, having not been able to reach the enemy. The princess burst out into new lamentations, and Rasselas could scarcely forbear to reproach them with cowardice; but Imlac was of opinion, that the escape of the Arabs was no addition to their misfortune, for perhaps they would have killed their captives rather than have resigned them.

CHAP. XXXIV.

THEY RETURN TO CAIRO WITHOUT PEKUAH.

THERE was nothing to be hoped from longer stay. They returned to Cairo repenting of their curiosity, censuring the negligence of the govern-

ment, lamenting their own rashness which had neglected to procure a guard, imagining many expedients by which the loss of Pekuah might have been prevented, and resolving to do something for her recovery, though none could find any thing proper to be done.

Nekayah retired to her chamber, where her women attempted to comfort her, by telling her that all had their troubles, and that lady Pekuah had enjoyed much happiness in the world for a long time, and might reasonably expect a change of fortune. They hoped that some good would befal her wheresoever she was, and that their mistress would find another friend who might supply her place.

The princess made them no answer, and they continued the form of condolence, not much grieved in their hearts that the favourite was lost.

Next day the prince presented to the Bassa a memorial of the wrong which he had suffered, and a petition for redress. The Bassa threatened to punish the robbers, but did not attempt to catch them, nor indeed, could any account or description be given by which he might direct the pursuit.

It soon appeared that nothing would be done by authority. Governors, being accustomed to hear of more crimes than they can punish, and more wrongs than they can redress, set themselves at ease by indiscriminate negligence, and presently forget the request when they lose sight of the petitioner.

Imlac then endeavoured to gain some intelligence by private agents. He found many who pretended to an exact knowledge of all the haunts of the

Arabs, and to regular correspondence with their chiefs, and who readily undertook the recovery of Pekuah. Of these, some were furnished with money for their journey, and came back no more; some were liberally paid for accounts which a few days discovered to be false. But the princess would not suffer any means, however improbable, to be left untried. While she was doing something she kept her hope alive. As one expedient failed, another was suggested; when one messenger returned unsuccessful, another was dispatched to a different quarter.

Two months had now passed, and of Pekuah nothing had been heard; the hopes which they had endeavoured to raise in each other grew more languid, and the princess, when she saw nothing more to be tried, sunk down inconsolable in hopeless dejection. A thousand times she reproached herself with the easy compliance, by which she permitted her favourite to stay behind her. "Had not my fondness," said she, "lessened my authority, Pekuah had not dared to talk of her terrors. She ought to have feared me more than spectres. A severe look would have overpowered her; a peremptory command would have compelled obedience. Why did foolish indulgence prevail upon me? Why did I not speak, and refuse to hear?"

"Great princess," said Imlac, "do not reproach yourself for your virtue, or consider that as blameable by which evil has accidentally been caused. Your tenderness for the timidity of Pekuah was generous and kind. When we act according to our duty, we commit the event to him by whose laws our actions are governed, and who will suffer none

to be finally punished for obedience. When, in prospect of some good, whether natural or moral, we break the rules prescribed us, we withdraw from the direction of superior wisdom, and take all consequences upon ourselves. Man cannot so far know the connexion of causes and events, as that he may venture to do wrong in order to do right. When we pursue our end by lawful means, we may always console our miscarriage by the hope of future recompence. When we consult only our own policy, and attempt to find a nearer way to good, by overleaping the settled boundaries of right and wrong, we cannot be happy even by success, because we cannot escape the consciousness of our fault: but, if we miscarry, the disappointment is irremediably embittered. How comfortless is the sorrow of him who feels at once the pangs of guilt, and the vexation of calamity which guilt has brought upon him?

"Consider, princess, what would have been your condition, if the lady Pekuah had entreated to accompany you, and being compelled to stay in the tents, had been carried away; or how would you have borne the thought, if you had forced her into the pyramid, and she had died before you in agonies of terror!"

"Had either happened," said Nekayah, "I could not have endured life till now: I should have been tortured to madness by the remembrance of such cruelty, or must have pined away in abhorrence of myself."

"This at least," said Imlac, "is the present reward of virtuous conduct, that no unlucky consequence can oblige us to repent it."

CHAP. XXXV.

THE PRINCESS LANGUISHES FOR WANT OF PEKUAH.

NEKAYAH being thus reconciled to herself, found that no evil is insupportable but that which is accompanied with consciousness of wrong. She was, from that time, delivered from the violence of tempestuous sorrow, and sunk into silent pensiveness and gloomy tranquillity. She sat from morning to evening recollecting all that had been done or said by her Pekuah, treasured up with care every trifle on which Pekuah had set an accidental value, and which might recal to mind any little incident or careless conversation. The sentiments of her, whom she now expected to see no more, were treasured in her memory as rules of life, and she deliberated to no other end than to conjecture on any occasion what would have been the opinion and counsel of Pekuah.

The women, by whom she was attended, knew nothing of her real condition, and therefore she could not talk to them but with caution and reserve. She began to remit her curiosity, having no great care to collect notions which she had no convenience of uttering. Rasselas endeavoured first to comfort, and afterwards to divert her; he hired musicians, to whom she seemed to listen, but did not hear them, and procured masters to instruct her in various arts, whose lectures, when they visited her again, were again to be repeated. She had lost her taste of pleasure, and her ambition of excellence. And her mind, though forced into short

excursions, always recurred to the image of her friend.

Imlac was every morning earnestly enjoined to renew his inquiries, and was asked every night whether he had yet heard of Pekuah, till not being able to return the princess the answer that she desired, he was less and less willing to come into her presence. She observed his backwardness, and commanded him to attend her. "You are not," said she, "to confound impatience with resentment, or to suppose that I charge you with negligence, because I repine at your unsuccessfulness. I do not much wonder at your absence; I know that the unhappy are never pleasing, and that all naturally avoid the contagion of misery. To hear complaints is wearisome alike to the wretched and the happy; for who would cloud, by adventitious grief, the short gleams of gaiety which life allows us? or who, that is struggling under his own evils, will add to them the miseries of another?

"The time is at hand, when none shall be disturbed any longer by the sighs of Nekayah: my search after happiness is now at an end. I am resolved to retire from the world with all its flatteries and deceits, and will hide myself in solitude without any other care than to compose my thoughts, and regulate my hours by a constant succession of innocent occupations, till, with a mind purified from all earthly desires, I shall enter into that state to which all are hastening, and in which I hope again to enjoy the friendship of Pekuah."

"Do not entangle your mind," said Imlac, "by irrevocable determinations, nor increase the burden of life by a voluntary accumulation of mi-

sery: the weariness of retirement will continue or increase when the loss of Pekuah is forgotten. That you have been deprived of one pleasure, is no very good reason for rejection of the rest."

"Since Pekuah was taken from me," said the princess, "I have no pleasure to reject or to retain. She that has no one to love or trust has little to hope. She wants the radical principle of happiness. We may, perhaps, allow that what satisfaction this world can afford, must arise from the conjunction of wealth, knowledge, and goodness: wealth is nothing but as it is bestowed, and knowledge nothing but as it is communicated; they must therefore be imparted to others, and to whom could I now delight to impart them? Goodness affords the only comfort which can be enjoyed without a partner, and goodness may be practised in retirement."

"How far solitude may admit goodness, or advance it, I shall not," replied Imlac, "dispute at present. Remember the confession of the pious hermit. You will wish to return into the world, when the image of your companion has left your thoughts."—"That time," said Nekayah, "will never come. The generous frankness, the modest obsequiousness, and the faithful secrecy of my dear Pekuah, will always be more missed, as I shall live longer to see vice and folly."

"The state of a mind oppressed with a sudden calamity," said Imlac, "is like that of the fabulous inhabitants of the new-created earth, who, when the first night came upon them, supposed that day would never return. When the clouds of sorrow gather over us, we see nothing beyond

them, nor can imagine how they will be dispelled; yet a new day succeeded to the night, and sorrow is never long without a dawn of ease. But they who restrain themselves from receiving comfort, do as the savages would have done, had they put out their eyes when it was dark. Our minds, like our bodies, are in continual flux; something is hourly lost, and something acquired. To lose much at once is inconvenient to either, but while the vital powers remain uninjured, nature will find the means of reparation. Distance has the same effect on the mind as on the eye, and while we glide along the stream of time, whatever we leave behind us is always lessening, and that which we approach increasing in magnitude. Do not suffer life to stagnate; it will grow muddy for want of motion: commit yourself again to the current of the world; Pekuah will vanish by degrees; you will meet in your way some other favourite, or learn to diffuse yourself in general conversation."

"At least," said the prince, "do not despair before all remedies have been tried: the inquiry after the unfortunate lady is still continued, and shall be carried on with yet greater diligence, on condition that you will promise to wait a year for the event, without any unalterable resolution."

Nekayah thought this a reasonable demand, and made the promise to her brother, who had been advised by Imlac to require it. Imlac had, indeed, no great hope of regaining Pekuah, but he supposed, that if he could secure the interval of a year, the princess would be then in no danger of a cloister.

CHAP. XXXVI.

PEKUAH IS STILL REMEMBERED. THE PROGRESS OF SORROW.

NEKAYAH, seeing that nothing was omitted for the recovery of her favourite, and having, by her promise, set her intention of retirement at a distance, began imperceptibly to return to common cares and common pleasures. She rejoiced without her own consent at the suspension of her sorrows, and sometimes caught herself with indignation in the act of turning away her mind from the remembrance of her, whom yet she resolved never to forget.

She then appointed a certain hour of the day for meditation on the merits and fondness of Pekuah, and for some weeks retired constantly at the time fixed, and returned with her eyes swoln and her countenance clouded. By degrees she grew less scrupulous, and suffered any important and pressing avocation to delay the tribute of daily tears. She then yielded to less occasions; sometimes forgot what she was indeed afraid to remember, and, at last, wholly released herself from the duty of periodical affliction.

Her real love of Pekuah was yet not diminished. A thousand occurrences brought her back to memory, and a thousand wants, which nothing but the confidence of friendship can supply, made her frequently regretted. She, therefore, solicited Imlac never to desist from inquiry, and to leave no art of intelligence untried, that, at least, she might have the comfort of knowing that she did not suffer by negligence or sluggishness. "Yet

what," said she, "is to be expected from our pursuit of happiness, when we find the state of life to be such, that happiness itself is the cause of misery? Why should we endeavour to attain that, of which the possession cannot be secured? I shall henceforward fear to yield my heart to excellence, however bright, or to fondness, however tender, lest I should lose again what I have lost in Pekuah."

CHAP. XXXVII.

THE PRINCESS HEARS NEWS OF PEKUAH.

IN seven months, one of the messengers, who had been sent away upon the day when the promise was drawn from the princess, returned, after many unsuccessful rambles, from the borders of Nubia, with an account that Pekuah was in the hands of an Arab chief, who possessed a castle or fortress on the extremity of Egypt. The Arab, whose revenue was plunder, was willing to restore her, with her two attendants, for two hundred ounces of gold.

The price was no subject of debate. The princess was in ecstacies when she heard that her favourite was alive, and might so cheaply be ransomed. She could not think of delaying for a moment Pekuah's happiness or her own, but entreated her brother to send back the messenger with the sum required. Imlac being consulted, was not very confident of the veracity of the relator, and was still more doubtful of the Arab's faith, who might, if he were too liberally trusted, detain at

once the money and the captives. He thought it dangerous to put themselves in the power of the Arab, by going into his district, and could not expect that the Rover would so much expose himself as to come into the lower country, where he might be seized by the forces of the Bassa.

It is difficult to negociate where neither will trust. But Imlac, after some deliberation, directed the messenger to propose that Pekuah should be conducted by ten horsemen to the monastery of St Antony, which is situated in the deserts of Upper Egypt, where she should be met by the same number, and her ransom should be paid.

That no time might be lost, as they expected that the proposal would not be refused, they immediately began their journey to the monastery; and, when they arrived, Imlac went forward with the former messenger to the Arab's fortress. Rasselas was desirous to go with them; but neither his sister nor Imlac would consent. The Arab, according to the custom of his nation, observed the laws of hospitality with great exactness to those who put themselves into his power, and, in a few days, brought Pekuah, with her maids, by easy journies, to the place appointed, where receiving the stipulated price, he restored her, with great respect, to liberty and herfriends, and undertook to conduct them back towards Cairo beyond all danger of robbery or violence.

The princess and her favourite embraced each other with transport too violent to be expressed, and went out together to pour the tears of tenderness in secret, and exchange professions of kindness and gratitude. After a few hours they returned

into the refectory of the convent, where, in the presence of the prior and his brethren, the prince required of Pekuah the history of her adventures.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

THE ADVENTURES OF THE LADY PEKUAH.

"AT what time, and in what manner, I was forced away," said Pekuah, "your servants have told you. The suddenness of the event struck me with surprize, and I was at first rather stupified than agitated with any passion of either fear or sorrow. My confusion was increased by the speed and tumult of our flight, while we were followed by the Turks, who, as it seemed, soon despaired to overtake us, or were afraid of those whom they made a shew of menacing.

"When the Arabs saw themselves out of danger, they slackened their course, and as I was less harassed by external violence, I began to feel more uneasiness in my mind. After some time we stopped near a spring shaded with trees, in a pleasant meadow, where we were set upon the ground, and offered such refreshments as our masters were partaking. I was suffered to sit with my maids apart from the rest, and none attempted to comfort or insult us. Here I first began to feel the full weight of my misery. The girls sat weeping in silence, and from time to time looked on me for succour. I knew not to what condition we were doomed, nor could conjecture where would be the place of our captivity, or whence to draw any hope

of deliverance. I was in the hands of robbers and savages, and had no reason to suppose that their pity was more than their justice, or that they would forbear the gratification of any ardour of desire, or caprice of cruelty. I, however, kissed my maids, and endeavoured to pacify them by remarking, that we were yet treated with decency, and that, since we were now carried beyond pursuit, there was no danger of violence to our lives.

"When we were to be set again on horseback, my maids clung round me, and refused to be parted, but I commanded them not to irritate those who had us in their power. We travelled the remaining part of the day through an unfrequented and pathless country, and came by moonlight to the side of a hill, where the rest of the troop was stationed. Their tents were pitched, and their fires kindled, and our chief was welcomed as a man much beloved by his dependents.

"We were received into a large tent, where we found women who had attended their husbands in the expedition. They set before us the supper which they had provided, and I eat it rather to encourage my maids than to comply with any appetite of my own. When the meat was taken away, they spread the carpets for repose. I was weary, and hoped to find in sleep that remission of distress which nature seldom denies. Ordering myself therefore to be undrest, I observed that the women looked very earnestly upon me, not expecting, I suppose, to see me so submissively attended. When my upper vest was taken off, they were apparently struck with the splendour of my clothes, and one of them timorously laid her hand

upon the embroidery. She then went out, and in a short time, came back with another woman, who seemed to be of higher rank, and greater authority. She did, at her entrance, the usual act of reverence, and taking me by the hand, placed me in a smaller tent, spread with finer carpets, where I spent the night quietly with my maids.

"In the morning, as I was sitting on the grass, the chief of the troop came towards me. I rose up to receive him, and he bowed with great respect. 'Illustrious lady,' said he, 'my fortune is better than I had presumed to hope; I am told by my women, that I have a princess in my camp.' 'Sir,' answered I, 'your women have deceived themselves and you; I am not a princess, but an unhappy stranger who intended soon to have left this country, in which I am now to be imprisoned for ever.' 'Whoever, or whencesoever, you are,' returned the Arab, 'your dress, and that of your servants, shew your rank to be high, and your wealth to be great. Why should you, who can so easily procure your ransom, think yourself in danger of perpetual captivity? The purpose of my incursions is to increase my riches, or, more properly, to gather tribute. The sons of Ishmael are the natural and hereditary lords of this part of the continent, which is usurped by late invaders, and low-born tyrants, from whom we are compelled to take by the sword what is denied to justice. The violence of war admits no distinction; the lance that is lifted at guilt and power, will sometimes fall on innocence and gentleness.'

'How little,' said I, 'did I expect that yesterday it should have fallen upon me!'

'Misfortunes,' answered the Arab, 'should always be expected. If the eye of hostility could learn reverence or pity, excellence like yours had been exempt from injury. But the angels of affliction spread their toils alike for the virtuous and the wicked, for the mighty and the mean. Do not be disconsolate: I am not one of the lawless and cruel rovers of the desert; I know the rules of civil life: I will fix your ransom, give a passport to your messenger, and perform my stipulation with nice punctuality.'

"You will easily believe that I was pleased with his courtesy: and finding that his predominant passion was desire of money, I began now to think my danger less, for I knew that no sum would be thought too great for the release of Pekuah. I told him, that he should have no reason to charge me with ingratitude, if I was used with kindness, and that any ransom which could be expected for a maid of common rank, would be paid; but that he must not persist to rate me as a princess. He said, he would consider what he should demand, and then, smiling, bowed and retired.

"Soon after the women came about me, each contending to be more officious than the other, and my maids themselves were served with reverence. We travelled onward by short journies. On the fourth day the chief told me, that my ransom must be two hundred ounces of gold; which I not only promised him, but told him, that I would add fifty more, if I and my maids were honourably treated

"I never knew the power of gold before. From that time I was the leader of the troop. The march of every day was longer or shorter as I com-

manded, and the tents were pitched where I chose to rest. We now had camels and other conveniencies for travel, my own women were always at my side, and I amused myself with observing the manners of the vagrant nations, and with viewing remains of ancient edifices, with which these deserted countries appear to have been, in some distant age, lavishly embellished.

"The chief of the band was a man far from illiterate: he was able to travel by the stars or the compass, and had marked in his erratick expeditions, such places as are most worthy the notice of a passenger. He observed to me, that buildings are always best preserved in places little frequented, and difficult of access: for, when once a country declines from its primitive splendour, the more inhabitants are left, the quicker ruin will be made. Walls supply stones more easily than quarries, and palaces and temples will be demolished, to make stables of granate, and cottages of porphyry.

CHAP. XXXIX.

THE ADVENTURES OF PEKUAH CONTINUED.

"WE wandered about in this manner for some weeks, whether, as our chief pretended, for my gratification, or, as I rather suspected, for some convenience of his own. I endeavoured to appear contented where sullenness and resentment would have been of no use, and that endeavour conduced much to the calmness of my mind; but my heart was always with Nekayah, and the troubles of the

night much overbalanced the amusements of the day. My women, who threw all their cares upon their mistress, set their minds at ease from the time when they saw me treated with respect, and gave themselves up to the incidental alleviations of our fatigue without solicitude or sorrow. I was pleased with their pleasure, and animated with their confidence. My condition had lost much of its terror, since I found that the Arab ranged the country merely to get riches. Avarice is an uniform and tractable vice: other intellectual distempers are different in different constitutions of mind; that which soothes the pride of one will offend the pride of another; but to the favour of the covetous there is a ready way; bring money, and nothing is denied.

"At last we came to the dwelling of our chief, a strong and spacious house, built with stone, in an island of the Nile, which lies, as I was told, under the tropick. 'Lady,' said the Arab,' 'you shall rest after your journey a few weeks in this place, where you are to consider yourself as sovereign. My occupation is war: I have therefore chosen this obscure residence, from which I can issue unexpected, and to which I can retire unpursued. You may now repose in security: here are few pleasures, but here is no danger.' He then led me into the inner apartments, and seating me on the richest couch, bowed to the ground. His women, who considered me as a rival, looked on me with malignity; but being soon informed that I was a great lady detained only for my ransom, they began to vie with each other in obsequiousness and reverence.

"Being again comforted with new assurances of speedy liberty, I was for some days diverted from impatience by the novelty of the place. The turrets overlooked the country to a great distance, and afforded a view of many windings of the stream. In the day I wandered from one place to another, as the course of the sun varied the splendour of the prospect, and saw many things which I had never seen before. The crocodiles and river-horses are common in this unpeopled region, and I often looked upon them with terror, though I knew that they could not hurt me. For some time I expected to see mermaids and tritons, which, as Imlac has told me, the European travellers have stationed in the Nile, but no such beings ever appeared, and the Arab, when I inquired after them, laughed at my credulity.

"At night the Arab always attended me to a tower set apart for celestial observations, where he endeavoured to teach me the names and courses of the stars. I had no great inclination to this study, but an appearance of attention was necessary to please my instructor, who valued himself for his skill; and, in a little while, I found some employment requisite to beguile the tediousness of time, which was to be passed always amidst the same objects. I was weary of looking in the morning on things from which I had turned away weary in the evening: I therefore was at last willing to observe the stars rather than do nothing, but could not always compose my thoughts, and was very often thinking on Nekayah, when others imagined me contemplating the sky. Soon after the Arab went upon another expedition, and then my only

pleasure was to talk with my maids about the accident by which we were carried away, and the happiness that we should all enjoy at the end of our captivity."

"There were women in your Arab's fortress," said the princess, "why did you not make them your companions, enjoy their conversation, and partake their diversions? In a place where they found business or amusement, why should you alone sit corroded with idle melancholy? or why could not you bear, for a few months, that condition to which they were condemned for life?"

"The diversions of the women," answered Pekuah, "were only childish play, by which the mind, accustomed to stronger operations, could not be kept busy. I could do all which they delighted in doing by powers merely sensitive, while my intellectual faculties were flown to Cairo. They ran from room to room as a bird hops from wire to wire in his cage. They danced for the sake of motion, as lambs frisk in a meadow. One sometimes pretended to be hurt, that the rest might be alarmed; or hid herself, that another might seek her. Part of their time passed in watching the progress of light bodies that floated on the river, and part in marking the various forms into which clouds broke in the sky.

"Their business was only needle-work, in which I and my maids sometimes helped them; but you know that the mind will easily straggle from the fingers, nor will you suspect that captivity and absence from Nekayah, could receive solace from silken flowers.

"Nor was much satisfaction to be hoped from

their conversation: for of what could they be expected to talk? They had seen nothing; for they had lived from early youth in that narrow spot: of what they had not seen they could have no knowledge, for they could not read. They had no ideas but of the few things that were within their view, and had hardly names for any thing but their clothes and their food. As I bore a superior character, I was often called to terminate their quarrels, which I decided as equitably as I could. If it could have amused me to hear the complaints of each against the rest, I might have been often detained by long stories; but the motives of their animosity were so small that I could not listen without intercepting the tale."

"How," said Rasselas, "can the Arab, whom you represented as a man of more than common accomplishments, take any pleasure in his seraglio when it is filled only with women like these? Are they exquisitely beautiful?"

"They do not," said Pekuah, "want that unaffecting and ignoble beauty which may subsist without sprightliness or sublimity, without energy of thought or dignity of virtue. But to a man like the Arab, such beauty was only a flower casually plucked and carelessly thrown away. Whatever pleasures he might find among them, they were not those of friendship or society. When they were playing about him, he looked on them with inattentive superiority: when they vied for his regard, he sometimes turned away disgusted. As they had no knowledge, their talk could take nothing from the tediousness of life: as they had no choice, their fondness, or appearance of fondness,

excited in him neither pride nor gratitude; he was not exalted in his own esteem by the smiles of a woman who saw no other man, nor was much obliged by that regard, of which he could never know the sincerity, and which he might often perceive to be exerted, not so much to delight him as to pain a rival. That which he gave, and they received, as love, was only a careless distribution of superfluous time, such love as man can bestow upon that which he despises, such as has neither hope nor fear, neither joy nor sorrow."

"You have reason, lady, to think yourself happy," said Imlac, "that you have been thus easily dismissed. How could a mind, hungry for knowledge, be willing, in an intellectual famine, to lose such a banquet as Pekuah's conversation?"

"I am inclined to believe," answered Pekuah, "that he was for some time in suspense; for, notwithstanding his promise, whenever I proposed to dispatch a messenger to Cairo, he found some excuse for delay. While I was detained in his house, he made many incursions into the neighbouring countries, and, perhaps, he would have refused to discharge me, had his plunder been equal to his wishes. He returned always courteous, related his adventures, delighted to hear my observations, and endeavoured to advance my acquaintance with the stars. When I importuned him to send away my letters, he soothed me with professions of honour and sincerity; and, when I could be no longer decently denied, put his troop again in motion, and left me to govern in his absence. I was much afflicted by this studied procrastination, and was sometimes afraid that I should be forgotten; that you

would leave Cairo, and I must end my days in an island of the Nile.

"I grew at last hopeless and dejected, and cared so little to entertain him, that he for a while more frequently talked with my maids. That he should fall in love with them, or with me, might have been equally fatal, and I was not much pleased with the growing friendship. My anxiety was not long; for, as I recovered some degree of cheerfulness, he returned to me, and I could not forbear to despise my former uneasiness.

"He still delayed to send for my ransom, and would, perhaps, never have determined, had not your agent found his way to him. The gold, which he would not fetch, he could not reject when it was offered. He hastened to prepare for our journey hither, like a man delivered from the pain of an intestine conflict. I took leave of my companions in the house, who dismissed me with cold indifference."

Nekayah having heard her favourite's relation, rose and embraced her, and Rasselas gave her an hundred ounces of gold, which she presented to the Arab for the fifty that were promised.

CHAP. XL.

THE HISTORY OF A MAN OF LEARNING.

THEY returned to Cairo, and were so well pleased at finding themselves together, that none of them went much abroad. The prince began to

love learning, and one day declared to Imlac, that he intended to devote himself to science, and pass the rest of his days in literary solitude.

"Before you make your final choice," answered Imlac, "you ought to examine its hazards, and converse with some of those who are grown old in the company of themselves. I have just left the observatory of one of the most learned astronomers in the world, who has spent forty years in unwearied attention to the motions and appearances of the celestial bodies, and has drawn out his soul in endless calculations. He admits a few friends once a month to hear his deductions and enjoy his discoveries. I was introduced as a man of knowledge worthy of his notice. Men of various ideas, and fluent conversation, are commonly welcome to those whose thoughts have been long fixed upon a single point, and who find the images of other things stealing away. I delighted him with my remarks; he smiled at the narrative of my travels, and was glad to forget the constellations, and descend for a moment into the lower world.

"On the next day of vacation I renewed my visit, and was so fortunate as to please him again. He relaxed from that time the severity of his rule, and permitted me to enter at my own choice. I found him always busy, and always glad to be relieved. As each knew much which the other was desirous of learning, we exchanged our notions with great delight. I perceived that I had every day more of his confidence, and always found new cause of admiration in the profundity of his mind. His comprehension is vast, his memory capacious and reten-

tive, his discourse is methodical, and his expression clear.

"His integrity and benevolence are equal to his learning. His deepest researches and most favourite studies are willingly interrupted for any opportunity of doing good by his counsel or his riches. To his closest retreat, at his most busy moments, all are admitted that want his assistance: 'For though I exclude idleness and pleasure, I will never,' says he, 'bar my doors against charity. To man is permitted the contemplation of the skies, but the practice of virtue is commanded."

"Surely," said the princess, "this man is happy."

"I visited him," said Imlac, "with more and more frequency, and was every time more enamoured of his conversation: he was sublime without haughtiness, courteous without formality, and communicative without ostentation. I was at first, great princess, of your opinion, thought him the happiest of mankind, and often congratulated him on the blessing that he enjoyed. He seemed to hear nothing with indifference but the praises of his condition, to which he always returned a general answer, and diverted the conversation to some other topick.

"Amidst this willingness to be pleased, and labour to please, I had quickly reason to imagine that some painful sentiment pressed upon his mind. He often looked up earnestly towards the sun, and let his voice fall in the midst of his discourse. He would sometimes, when we were alone, gaze upon me in silence, with the air of a man who longed to speak what he was yet resolved to suppress. He would often send for me with vehement injunctions

of haste, though, when I came to him, he had nothing extraordinary to say. And sometimes, when I was leaving him, would call me back, pause a few moments, and then dismiss me.

CHAP. XLI.

THE ASTRONOMER DISCOVERS THE CAUSE OF HIS UNEASINESS.

"AT last the time came when the secret burst his reserve. We were sitting together last night in the turret of his house, watching the emersion of a satellite of Jupiter. A sudden tempest clouded the sky, and disappointed our observation. We sat a while silent in the dark, and then he addressed himself to me in these words: 'Imlac, I have long considered thy friendship as the greatest blessing of my life. Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful. I have found in thee all the qualities requisite for trust, benevolence, experience, and fortitude. I have long discharged an office which I must soon quit at the call of nature, and shall rejoice in the hour of imbecility and pain to devolve it upon thee.'

"I thought myself honoured by this testimony, and protested that whatever could conduce to his happiness would add likewise to mine."

"Hear, Imlac, what thou wilt not without difficulty credit. I have possessed for five years the regulation of weather, and the distribution of the seasons: the sun has listened to my dictates, and

passed from tropick to tropick by my direction; the clouds, at my call, have poured their waters, and the Nile has overflowed at my command; I have restrained the rage of the dog-star, and mitigated the fervours of the crab. The winds alone, of all the elemental powers, have hitherto refused my authority, and multitudes have perished by equinoctial tempests, which I found myself unable to prohibit or restrain. I have administered this great office with exact justice, and made to the different nations of the earth an impartial dividend of rain and sunshine. What must have been the misery of half the globe, if I had limited the clouds to particular regions, or confined the sun to either side of the equator!"

CHAP. XLII.

THE OPINION OF THE ASTRONOMER IS EXPLAINED AND JUSTIFIED.

"I SUPPOSE he discovered in me, through the obscurity of the room, some tokens of amazement and doubt; for, after a short pause, he proceeded thus:"

"Not to be easily credited will neither surprise nor offend me; for I am, probably, the first of human beings to whom this trust has been imparted. Nor do I know whether to deem this distinction a reward or punishment; since I have possessed it, I have been far less happy than before, and nothing but the consciousness of good intention could have enabled me to support the weariness of unremitted vigilance."

"How long, Sir," said I, "has this great office been in your hands?"

"About ten years ago," said he, "my daily observations of the changes of the sky led me to consider, whether, if I had the power of the seasons, I could confer greater plenty upon the inhabitants of the earth. This contemplation fastened on my mind, and I sat days and nights in imaginary dominion, pouring upon this country and that the showers of fertility, and seconding every fall of rain with a due proportion of sunshine. I had yet only the will to do good, and did not imagine that I should ever have the power.

"One day, as I was looking on the fields withering with heat, I felt in my mind a sudden wish that I could send rain on the southern mountains, and raise the Nile to an inundation. In the hurry of my imagination I commanded rain to fall, and by comparing the time of my command with that of the inundation, I found that the clouds had listened to my lips."

"Might not some other cause," said I, "produce this concurrence? the Nile does not always rise on the same day."

"Do not believe," said he, with impatience, "that such objections could escape me: I reasoned long against my own conviction, and laboured against truth with the utmost obstinacy. I sometimes suspected myself of madness, and should not have dared to impart this secret but to a man like you, capable of distinguishing the wonderful from the impossible, and the incredible from the false."

"Why, Sir," said I, "do you call that incre-

dible, which you know, or think you know, to be true?"

"Because," said he, "I cannot prove it by any external evidence; and I know too well the laws of demonstration to think that my convcition ought to influence another, who cannot, like me, be conscious of its force. I, therefore, shall not attempt to gain credit by disputation. It is sufficient that I feel this power, that I have long possessed, and every day exerted it. But the life of man is short, the infirmities of age increase upon me, and the time will soon come, when the regulator of the year must mingle with the dust. The care of appointing a successor has long disturbed me; the night and the day have been spent in comparisons of all the characters which have come to my knowledge, and I have yet found none so worthy as thyself."

CHAP. XLIII.

THE ASTRONOMER LEAVES IMLAC HIS DIRECTIONS.

"HEAR, therefore, what I shall impart with attention, such as the welfare of a world requires. If the task of a king be considered as difficult, who has the care only of a few millions, to whom he cannot do much good or harm, what must be the anxiety of him, on whom depends the action of the elements, and the great gifts of light and heat!—Hear me therefore with attention.

"I have diligently considered the position of

the earth and sun, and formed innumerable schemes in which I changed their situation. I have sometimes turned aside the axis of the earth, and sometimes varied the ecliptick of the sun: but I have found it impossible to make a disposition by which the world may be advantaged; what one region gains, another loses by an imaginable alteration, even without considering the distant parts of the solar system with which we are unacquainted. Do not, therefore, in thy administration of the year, indulge thy pride by innovation; do not please thyself with thinking that thou canst make thyself renowned to all future ages, by disordering the seasons. The memory of mischief is no desirable fame. Much less will it become thee to let kindness or interest prevail. Never rob other countries of rain to pour it on thine own. For us the Nile is sufficient."

"I promised, that when I possessed the power, I would use it with inflexible integrity; and he dismissed me, pressing my hand." 'My heart,' said he, 'will be now at rest, and my benevolence will no more destroy my quiet; I have found a man of wisdom and virtue, to whom I can cheerfully bequeath the inheritance of the sun."

The prince heard this narration with very serious regard; but the princess smiled, and Pekuah convulsed herself with laughter. "Ladies," said Imlac, "to mock the heaviest of human afflictions is neither charitable nor wise. Few can attain this man's knowledge, and few practise his virtues; but all may suffer his calamity. Of the uncertainties of our present state, the most dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reason."

The princess was recollected, and the favourite was abashed. Rasselas, more deeply affected, inquired of Imlac, whether he thought such maladies of the mind frequent, and how they were contracted?

CHAP. XLIV.

THE DANGEROUS PREVALENCE OF IMAGINATION.

"DISORDERS of intellect," answered Imlac, "happen much more often than superficial observers will easily believe. Perhaps, if we speak with rigorous exactness, no human mind is in its right state. There is no man whose imagination does not sometimes predominate over his reason, who can regulate his attention wholly by his will, and whose ideas will come and go at his command. No man will be found in whose mind airy notions do not sometimes tyrannize, and force him to hope or fear beyond the limits of sober probability. All power of fancy over reason is a degree of insanity; but while this power is such as we can control and repress, it is not visible to others, nor considered as any depravation of the mental faculties: it is not pronounced madness but when it becomes ungovernable, and apparently influences speech or action.

"To indulge the power of fiction, and send imagination out upon the wing, is often the sport of those who delight too much in silent speculation. When we are alone we are not always busy;

the labour of excogitation is too violent to last long; the ardour of inquiry will sometimes give way to idleness or satiety. He who has nothing external that can divert him, must find pleasure in his own thoughts, and must conceive himself what he is not; for who is pleased with what he is? He then expatiates in boundless futurity, and culls from all imaginable conditions that which for the present moment he should most desire, amuses his desires with impossible enjoyments, and confers upon his pride unattainable dominion. The mind dances from scene to scene, unites all pleasures in all combinations, and riots in delights, which nature and fortune, with all their bounty, cannot bestow.

"In time, some particular train of ideas fixes the attention, all other intellectual gratifications are rejected, the mind, in weariness or leisure, recurs constantly to the favourite conception, and feasts on the luscious falsehood, whenever she is offended with the bitterness of truth. By degrees the reign of fancy is confirmed; she grows first imperious, and in time despotick. Then fictions begin to operate as realities, false opinions fasten upon the mind, and life passes in dreams of rapture or of anguish.

"This, Sir, is one of the dangers of solitude, which the hermit has confessed not always to promote goodness, and the astronomer's misery has proved to be not always propitious to wisdom."

"I will no more," said the favourite, "imagine myself the queen of Abissinia. I have often spent the hours, which the princess gave to my own disposal, in adjusting ceremonies and regulating the court; I have repressed the pride of the

powerful, and granted the petitions of the poor; I have built new palaces in more happy situations, planted groves upon the tops of mountains, and have exulted in the beneficence of royalty, till, when the princess entered, I had almost forgotten to bow down before her."

"And I," said the princess, "will not allow myself any more to play the shepherdess in my waking dreams. I have often soothed my thoughts with the quiet and innocence of pastoral employments, till I have in my chamber heard the winds whistle, and the sheep bleat: sometimes freed the lamb entangled in the thicket, and sometimes with my crook encountered the wolf. I have a dress like that of the village maids, which I put on to help my imagination, and a pipe on which I play softly, and suppose myself followed by my flocks."

"I will confess," said the prince, "an indulgence of fantastick delight more dangerous than yours. I have frequently endeavoured to image the possibility of a perfect government, by which all wrong should be restrained, all vice reformed, and all the subjects preserved in tranquillity and innocence. This thought produced innumerable schemes of reformation, and dictated many useful regulations and salutary edicts. This has been the sport, and sometimes the labour, of my solitude; and I start, when I think with how little anguish I once supposed the death of my father and my brothers."

"Such," says Imlac, "are the effects of visionary schemes: when we first form them we know them to be absurd, but familiarize them by degrees, and in time lose sight of their folly."

CHAP. XLV.

THEY DISCOURSE WITH AN OLD MAN.

THE evening was now far past, and they rose to return home. As they walked along the bank of the Nile, delighted with the beams of the moon quivering on the water, they saw at a small distance an old man, whom the prince had often heard in the assembly of the sages. "Yonder," said he, "is one whose years have calmed his passions, but not clouded his reason: let us close the disquisitions of the night, by inquiring what are his sentiments of his own state, that we may know whether youth alone is to struggle with vexation, and whether any better hope remains for the latter part of life."

Here the sage approached and saluted them. They invited him to join their walk, and prattled a while, as acquaintance that had unexpectedly met one another. The old man was cheerful and talkative, and the way seemed short in his company. He was pleased to find himself not disregarded, accompanied them to their house, and, at the prince's request, entered with them. They placed him in the seat of honour, and set wine and conserves before him.

"Sir," said the princess, "an evening walk must give to a man of learning, like you, pleasures which ignorance and youth can hardly conceive. You know the qualities and the causes of all that you behold, the laws by which the river flows, the periods in which the planets perform their revolutions. Every thing must supply you with contem

plation, and renew the consciousness of your own dignity."

"Lady," answerred he, "let the gay and the vigorous expect pleasure in their excursions; it is enough that age can obtain ease. To me the world has lost its novelty: I look round, and see what I remember to have seen in happier days. I rest against a tree, and consider that in the same shade I once disputed upon the annual overflow of the Nile with a friend who is now silent in the grave. I cast my eyes upwards, fix them on the changing moon, and think with pain on the vicissitudes of life. I have ceased to take much delight in physical truth; for what have I to do with those things which I am soon to leave?"

"You may at least recreate yourself," said Imlac, "with the recollection of an honourable and useful life, and enjoy the praise which all agree to give you."

"Praise," said the sage, with a sigh, "is to an old man an empty sound. I have neither mother to be delighted with the reputation of her son, nor wife to partake the honours of her husband. I have outlived my friends and my rivals. Nothing is now of much importance; for I cannot extend my interest beyond myself. Youth is delighted with applause, because it is considered as the earnest of some future good, and because the prospect of life is far extended: but to me, who am now declining to decrepitude, there is little to be feared from the malevolence of men, and yet less to be hoped from their affection or esteem. Something they may yet take away, but they can give me nothing. Riches would now be useless, and high employment would be pain.

My retrospect of life recalls to my view many opportunities of good neglected, much time squandered upon trifles, and more lost in idleness and vacancy. I leave many great designs unattempted, and many great attempts unfinished. My mind is burdened with no heavy crime, and therefore I compose myself to tranquillity; endeavour to abstract my thoughts from hopes and cares, which, though reason knows them to be vain, still try to keep their old possession of the heart; expect, with serene humility, that hour which nature cannot long delay; and hope to possess, in a better state, that happiness which here I could not find, and that virtue which here I have not attained."

He rose and went away, leaving his audience not much elated with the hope of long life. The prince consoled himself with remarking, that it was not reasonable to be disappointed by this account; for age had never been considered as the season of felicity, and if it was possible to be easy in decline and weakness, it was likely that the days of vigour and alacrity might be happy: that the noon of life might be bright, if the evening could be calm.

The princess suspected that age was querulous and malignant, and delighted to repress the expectations of those who had newly entered the world. She had seen the possessors of estates look with envy on their heirs, and known many who enjoyed pleasure no longer than they can confine it to themselves.

Pekuah conjectured, that the man was older than he appeared, and was willing to impute his complaints to delirious dejection: or else supposed that he had been unfortunate, and was therefore discontented: "For nothing," said she, "is more com-

mon, than to call our own condition, the condition of life."

Imlac, who had no desire to see them depressed, smiled at the comforts which they could so readily procure to themselves, and remembered, that at the same age, he was equally confident of unmingled prosperity, and equally fertile of consolatory expedients. He forbore to force upon them unwelcome knowledge, which time itself would too soon impress. The princess and her lady retired; the madness of the astronomer hung upon their minds, and they desired Imlac to enter upon his office, and delay next morning the rising of the sun.

CHAP. XLVI.

THE PRINCESS AND PEKUAH VISIT THE ASRTONOMER.

THE princess and Pekuah having talked in private of Imlac's astronomer, thought his character at once so amiable and so strange, that they could not be satisfied without a nearer knowledge; and Imlac was requested to find the means of bringing them together.

This was somewhat difficult; the philosopher had never received any visits from women, though he lived in a city that had in it many Europeans who followed the manners of their own countries, and many from other parts of the world, that lived there with European liberty. The ladies would not be refused, and several schemes were proposed for the accomplishment of their design. It was pro-

posed to introduce them as strangers in distress, to whom the sage was always accessible; but, after some deliberation, it appeared, that by this artifice, no acquaintance could be formed, for their conversation would be short, and they could not decently importune him often. "This," said Rasselas, "is true; but I have yet a stronger objection against the misrepresentation of your state. I have always considered it as treason against the great republick of human nature, to make any man's virtues the means of deceiving him, whether on great or little occasions. All imposture weakens confidence and chills benevolence. When the sage finds that you are not what you seemed, he will feel the resentment natural to a man who, conscious of great abilities, discovers that he has been tricked by understandings meaner than his own, and, perhaps, the distrust, which he can never afterwards wholly lay aside, may stop the voice of counsel, and close the hand of charity; and where will you find the power of restoring his benefactions to mankind, or his peace to himself?"

To this no reply was attempted, and Imlac began to hope that their curiosity would subside; but, next day, Pekuah told him, she had now found an honest pretence for a visit to the astronomer, for she would solicit permission to continue under him the studies in which she had been initiated by the Arab, and the princess might go with her either as a fellow-student, or because a woman could not decently come alone. "I am afraid," said Imlac, "that he will be soon weary of your company: men advanced far in knowledge do not love to repeat the elements of their art, and I am not cer-

tain that even of the elements, as he will deliver them, connected with inferences, and mingled with reflections, you are a very capable auditress." "That," said Pekuah, "must be my care: I ask of you only to take me thither. My knowledge is, perhaps, more than you imagine it, and, by concurring always with his opinions, I shall make him think it greater than it is."

The astronomer, in pursuance of this resolution, was told, that a foreign lady, travelling in search of knowledge, had heard of his reputation, and was desirous to become his scholar. The uncommonness of the proposal raised at once his surprise and curiosity; and when, after a short deliberation, he consented to admit her, he could not stay without impatience till the next day.

The ladies dressed themselves magnificently, and were attended by Imlac to the astronomer, who was pleased to see himself approached with respect by persons of so splendid an appearance. In the exchange of the first civilities he was timorous and bashful; but when the talk became regular, he recollected his powers, and justified the character which Imlac had given. Inquiring of Pekuah, what could have turned her inclination towards astronomy? he received from her a history of her adventure at the pyramid, and of the time passed in the Arab's island. She told her tale with ease and elegance, and her conversation took possession of his heart. The discourse was then turned to astronomy: Pekuah displayed what she knew: he looked upon her as a prodigy of genius, and entreated her not to desist from a study which she had so happily begun.

They came again and again, and were every time more welcome than before. The sage endeavoured to amuse them, that they might prolong their visits, for he found his thoughts grow brighter in their company; the clouds of solicitude vanished by degrees, as he forced himself to entertain them, and he grieved when he was left at their departure to his old employment of regulating the seasons.

The princess and her favourite had now watched his lips for several months, and could not catch a single word from which they could judge whether he continued, or not, in the opinion of his preternatural commission. They often contrived to bring him to an open declaration; but he easily eluded all their attacks, and on which side soever they pressed him, escaped from them to some other topick.

As their familiarity increased, they invited him often to the house of Imlac, where they distinguished him by extraordinary respect. He began gradually to delight in sublunary pleasures. He came early, and departed late; laboured to recommend himself by assiduity and compliance; excited their curiosity after new arts, that they might still want his assistance; and when they made any excursion of pleasure or inquiry, entreated to attend them.

By long experience of his integrity and wisdom, the prince and his sister were convinced that he might be trusted without danger; and, lest he should draw any false hopes from the civilities which he received, discovered to him their condition, with the motives

of their journey; and required his opinion on the choice of life.

"Of the various conditions which the world spreads before you, which you shall prefer," said the sage, "I am not able to instruct you. I can only tell that I have chosen wrong. I have passed my time in study without experience; in the attainment of sciences which can, for the most part, be but remotely useful to mankind. I have purchased knowledge at the expence of all the common comforts of life: I have missed the endearing elegance of female friendship, and the happy commerce of domestick tenderness. If I have obtained any prerogatives above other students, they have been accompanied with fear, disquiet, and scrupulosity; but even of these prerogatives, whatever they were, I have, since my thoughts have been diversified by more intercourse with the world, begun to question the reality. When I have been for a few days lost in pleasing dissipation, I am always tempted to think that my inquiries have ended in error, and that I have suffered much, and suffered it in vain."

Imlac was delighted to find that the sage's understanding was breaking through its mists, and resolved to detain him from the planets till he should forget his task of ruling them, and reason should recover its original influence.

From this time the astronomer was received into familiar friendship, and partook of all their projects and pleasures: his respect kept him attentive, and the activity of Rasselas did not leave much time unengaged. Something was always to be done; the day was spent in making observations which fur-

nished talk for the evening, and the evening was closed with a scheme for the morrow.

The sage confessed to Imlac, that since he had mingled in the gay tumults of life, and divided his hours by succession of amusements, he found the conviction of his authority over the skies fade gradually from his mind, and began to trust less to an opinion which he never could prove to others, and which he now found subject to variation, from causes in which reason had no part. "If I am accidentally left alone for a few hours," said he, "my inveterate persuasion rushes upon my soul, and my thoughts are chained down by some irresistible violence; but they are soon disentangled by the prince's conversation, and instantaneously released at the entrance of Pekuah. I am like a man habitually afraid of spectres, who is set at ease by a lamp, and wonders at the dread which harassed him in the dark; yet, if his lamp be extinguished, feels again the terrors which he knows that when it is light he shall feel no more. But I am sometimes afraid lest I indulge my quiet by criminal negligence, and voluntarily forget the great charge with which I am intrusted. If I favour myself in a known error, or am determined by my own ease in a doubtful question of this importance, how dreadful is my crime!"

"No disease of the imagination," answered Imlac, "is so difficult of cure, as that which is complicated with the dread of guilt: fancy and conscience then act interchangeably upon us, and so often shift their places, that the illusions of one are not distinguished from the dictates of the other. If fancy presents images not moral or religious, the mind drives

them away when they give it pain, but when melancholick notions take the form of duty, they lay hold on the faculties without opposition, because we are afraid to exclude or banish them. For this reason the superstitious are often melancholy, and the melancholy almost always superstitious.

"But do not let the suggestions of timidity overpower your better reason: the danger of neglect can be but as the probability of the obligation, which when you consider it with freedom, you find very little, and that little growing every day less. Open your heart to the influence of the light, which, from time to time, breaks in upon you: when scruples importune you, which you in your lucid moments know to be vain, do not stand to parley, but fly to business or to Pekuah, and keep this thought always prevalent, that you are only one atom of the mass of humanity, and have neither such virtue nor vice, as that you should be singled out for supernatural favours or afflictions."

CHAP. XLVII.

THE PRINCE ENTERS, AND BRINGS A NEW TOPICK.

"ALL this," said the astronomer, "I have often thought, but my reason has been so long subjugated by an uncontroulable and overwhelming idea, that it durst not confide in its own decisions. I now see how fatally I betrayed my quiet, by suffering chimeras to prey upon me in secret; but melancholy shrinks from communication, and I never found a man before to whom I could impart my

troubles, though I had been certain of relief. I rejoice to find my own sentiments confirmed by yours, who are not easily deceived, and can have no motive or purpose to deceive, I hope that time and variety will dissipate the gloom that has so long surrounded me, and the latter part of my days will be spent in peace."

"Your learning and virtue," said Imlac, "may justly give you hopes."

Rasselas then entered with the princess and Pekuah, and inquired whether they had contrived any new diversion for the next day? "Such" said Nekayah, "is the state of life, that none are happy but by the anticipation of change: the change itself is nothing: when we have made it, the next wish is to change again. The world is not yet exhausted; let me see something to-morrow which I never saw before."

"Variety," said Rasselas, "is so necessary to content, that even the Happy Valley disgusted me by the recurrence of its luxuries; yet I could not forbear to reproach myself with impatience, when I saw the monks of St Anthony support, without complaint, a life not of uniform delight, but uniform hardship."

"Those men," answered Imlac, "are less wretched in their silent convent that the Abissinian princes in their prison of pleasure. Whatever is done by the monks is incited by an adequate and reasonable motive. Their labour supplies them with necessaries; it therefore cannot be omitted, and is certainly rewarded. Their devotion prepares them for another state, and reminds them of its approach, while it fits them for it. Their time

is regularly distributed; one duty succeeds another, so that they are not left open to the distraction of unguided choice, nor lost in the shades of listless inactivity. There is a certain task to be performed at an appropriated hour; and their toils are cheerful, because they consider them as acts of piety, by which they are always advancing towards endless felicity."

"Do you think," said Nekayah, "that the monastick rule is a more holy and less imperfect state than any other? May not he equally hope for future happiness who converses openly with mankind, who succours the distressed by his charity, intsructs the ignorant by his learning, and contributes by his industry to the general system of life; even though he should omit some of the mortifications which are practised in the cloister, and allow himself such harmless delights as his condition may place within his reach?"

"This," said Imlac, "is a question which has long divided the wise, and perplexed the good. I am afaid to decide on either part. He that lives well in the world is better than he that lives well in a monastery. But, perhaps, every one is not able to stem the temptations of publick life; and if he cannot conquer, he may properly retreat. Some have little power to do good, and have likewise little strength to resist evil. Many are weary of their conflicts with adversity, and are willing to eject those passions which have long busied them in vain. And many are dismissed by age and diseases from the more laborious duties of society. In monasteries the weak and timorous may be happily sheltered, the weary may repose, and the penitent may

meditate. Those retreats of prayer and contemplation have something so congenial to the mind of man, that, perhaps, there is scarcely one that does not propose to close his life in pious abstraction with a few associates serious as himself."

"Such," said Pekuah, "has often been my wish, and I have heard the princess declare, that she should not willingly die in a crowd."

"The liberty of using harmless pleasures," proceeded Imlac, "will not be disputed; but it is still to be examined what pleasures are harmless. The evil of any pleasure that Nekayah can image is not in the act itself, but in its consequences. Pleasure, in itself harmless, may become mischievous, by endearing to us a state which we knew to be transient and probatory, and withdrawing our thoughts from that, of which every hour brings us nearer to the beginning, and of which no length of time will bring us to the end. Mortification is not virtuous in itself, nor has any other use, but that it disengages us from the allurements of sense. In the state of future perfection, to which we all aspire, there will be pleasure without danger, and security without restraint."

The princess was silent, and Rasselas, turning to the astronomer, asked him, whether he could not delay her retreat, by shewing her something which she had not seen before.

"Your curiosity," said the sage, "has been so general, and your pursuit of knowledge so vigorous, that novelties are not now very easily to be found: but what you can no longer procure from the living may be given by the dead. Among the wonders of this country are the catacombs, or the

ancient repositories, in which the bodies of the earliest generations were lodged, and where, by the virtue of the gums which embalmed them, they yet remain without corruption."

"I know not," said Rasselas, "what pleasure the sight of the catacombs can afford; but since nothing else offered, I am resolved to view them, and shall place this with many other things which I have done, because I would do something."

They hired a guard of horsemen, and the next day visited the catacombs. When they were about to descend into the sepulchral caves, "Pekuah," said the princess, "we are now again invading the habitations of the dead; I know that you will stay behind; let me find you safe when I return." "No," I will not be left, answered Pekuah; "I will go down between you and the prince."

They then all descended, and roved with wonder through the labyrinth of subterraneous passages, where the bodies were laid in rows on either side.

CHAP. XLVIII.

IMLAC DISCOURSES ON THE NATURE OF THE SOUL.

"WHAT reason," said the prince "can be given, why the Egyptians should thus expensively preserve those carcases which some nations consume with fire, others lay to mingle with the earth, and all agree to remove from their sight, as soon as decent rites can be performed?"

The original of ancient customs," said Imlac, "is commonly unknown; for the practice often continues when the cause has ceased; and concerning superstitious ceremonies it is vain to conjecture; for what reason did not dictate, reason cannot explain. I have long believed that the practice of embalming arose only from tenderness to the remains of relations or friends, and to this opinion I am more inclined, because it seems impossible that this care should have been general: had all the dead been embalmed, their repositories must in time have been more spacious than the dwellings of the living. I suppose only the rich or honourable were secured from corruption, and the rest left to the course of nature.

"But it is commonly supposed that the Egyptians believed the soul to live as long as the body continued undissolved, and therefore tried this method of eluding death."

"Could the wise Egyptians," said Nekayah, "think so grossly of the soul? If the soul could once survive its separation, what could it afterwards receive or suffer from the body?"

"The Egyptians would doubtless think erroneously," said the astronomer, "in the darkness of heathenism, and the first dawn of philosophy. The nature of the soul is still disputed amidst all our opportunities of clearer knowledge: some yet say, that it may be material, who, nevertheless, believe it to be immortal."

Some," answered Imlac, "have indeed said that the soul is material, but I can scarcely believe that any man has thought it, who knew how to think; for all the conclusions of reason enforce the immateri-

ality of mind, and all the notices of sense and investigations of science, concur to prove the unconsciousness of matter.

"It was never supposed that cogitation is inherent in matter, or that every particle is a thinking being. Yet, if any part of matter be devoid of thought, what part can we suppose to think? Matter can differ from matter only in form, density, bulk, motion, and direction of motion: to which of these, however varied or combined, can consciousness be annexed? To be round or square, to be solid or fluid, to be great or little, to be moved slowly or swiftly one way or another, are modes of material existence, all equally alien from the nature of cogitation. If matter be once without thought, it can only be made to think by some new modification, but all the modifications which it can admit are equally unconnected with cogitative powers."

"But the materialists," said the astronomer, "urge that matter may have qualities with which we are unacquainted."

"He who will determine," returned Imlac, "against that which he knows, because there may be something which he knows not; he that can set hypothetical possibility against acknowledged certainty, is not to be admitted among reasonable beings. All that we know of matter is, that matter is inert, senseless, and lifeless; and if this conviction cannot be opposed but by referring us to something that we know not, we have all the evidence that human intellect can admit. If that which is known may be overruled by that which is unknown, no being not omniscient, can arrive at certainty."

"Yet let us not," said the astronomer, "too arrogantly limit the Creator's power."

"It is no limitation of omnipotence," replied the poet, "to suppose that one thing is not consistent with another, that the same proposition cannot be at once true and false, that the same number cannot be even and odd, that cogitation cannot be conferred on that which is created incapable of cogitation."

"I know not," said Nekayah, "any great use of this question. Does that immateriality, which, in my opinion, you have sufficiently proved, necessarily include eternal duration?"

"Of immateriality," said Imlac, "our ideas are negative, and therefore obscure. Immateriality seems to imply a natural power of perpetual duration, as a consequence of exemption from all causes of decay: whatever perishes is destroyed by the solution of its contexture, and separation of its parts; nor can we conceive how that which has no parts, and therefore admits no solution, can be naturally corrupted or impaired."

"I know not," said Rasselas, "how to conceive any thing without extension; what is extended must have parts, and you allow, that whatever has parts may be destroyed."

"Consider your own conceptions," replied Imlac, "and the difficulty will be less. You will find substance without extension. An ideal form is no less real than material bulk: yet an ideal form has no extension. It is no less certain, when you think on a pyramid, that your mind possesses the idea of a pyramid, than that the pyramid itself is standing. What space does the idea of a pyramid occupy more

than the idea of a grain of corn? or how can either idea suffer laceration? As is the effect, such is the cause: as thought, such is the power that thinks; a power impassive and indiscerptible."

"But the Being," said Nekayah, "whom I fear to name, the Being which made the soul can destroy it."

"He, surely, can destroy it," answered Imlac, "since however unperishable, it receives from a superior nature its power of duration. That it will not perish by any inherent cause of decay, or principle of corruption, may be shewn by philosophy; but philosophy can tell no more. That it will not be annihilated by him that made it, we must humbly learn from higher authority."

The whole assembly stood a while silent and collected. "Let us return," said Rasselas "from this scence of mortality. How gloomy would be these mansions of the dead to him who did not know that he should never die; that what now acts shall continue its agency, and what now thinks shall think on for ever. Those that lie here stretched before us, the wise and the powerful of ancient times, warn us to remember the shortness of our present state: they were, perhaps, snatched away while they were busy, like us, in the choice of life."

"To me," said the princess, "the choice of life is become less important; I hope hereafter to think only on the choice of eternity."

They then hastened out of the caverns, and, under the protection of their gaurd, returned to Cairo.

CHAP. XLIX.

THE CONCLUSION, IN WHICH NOTHING IS CONCLUDED.

IT was now the time of the inundation of the Nile: a few days after their visit to the catacombs, the river began to rise.

They were confined to their house. The whole region being under water gave them no invitation to any excursions, and, being well supplied with materials for talk, they diverted themselves with comparisons of the different forms of life which they had observed, and with various schemes of happiness, which each of them had formed.

Pekuah was never so much charmed with any place as the convent of St Anthony, where the Arab restored her to the princess, and wished only to fill it with pious maidens, and to be made prioress of the order: she was weary of expectation and disgust, and would gladly be fixed in some unvariable state.

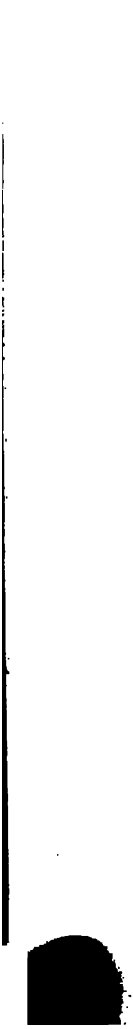
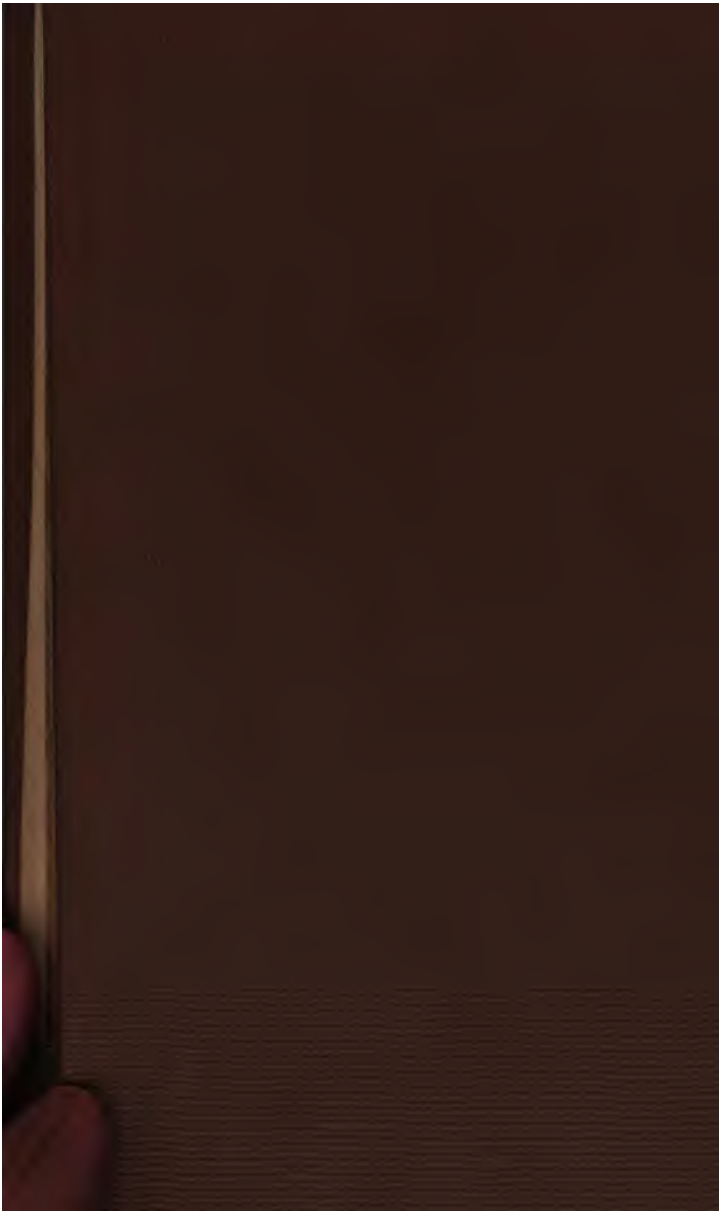
The Princess thought, that of all sublunary things knowledge was the best: she desired first to learn all sciences, and then purposed to found a college of learned women, in which she would preside, that by conversing with the old, and educating the young, she might divide her time between the acquisition and communication of wisdom, and raise up for the next age models of prudence, and patterns of piety.

The prince desired a little kingdom, in which he might administer justice in his

see all the parts of government with his own eyes; but he could never fix the limits of his dominion, and was always adding to the number of his subjects.

Imlac and the astronomer were contented to be driven along the stream of life, without directing their course to any particular port.

Of these wishes that they had formed they well knew that none could be obtained. They deliberated a while what was to be done, and resolved, when the inundation should cease, to return to Abissinia.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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